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SLAMMING THE DOOR

THE common man's hopes of peace have been raised this week and dashed to the ground. On May 4th the American Ambassador in Moscow presented Mr. Molotov with a statement that, "as far as the United States is concerned, the door always remains open for discussion and settlement of our differences." He added that the Soviet Union "will not encounter on our part a lack of readiness and desire to make our contribution to the cause of such a stabilisation of world conditions as will be fully compatible with the security of the Soviet people." This invitation was linked with a complaint that Soviet policy was responsible for the worsening relations between the two Powers. But, in spite of official statements, it was not, in the text, hedged about with any conditions. Nor, without incurring the charge of hypocrisy, can the State Department argue that the invitation was merely formal and incidental and the Note designed to explain American policy in case Russia should be misled by wild rectoral statements!

If the Soviet Government had refused or made an equivocal reply, the State Department could have said that its constructive offer had been rejected by the U.S.S.R. Mr. Molotov replied immediately, agreeing to the discussion. He added, at some length, that, in his view, American and not Soviet policy was responsible for the world tension. But his reply was positive, and ordinary men everywhere raised their heads in hope that the darkening shadow of world war would be lifted and that an attempt would be made to reach, if not a settlement, at least an agreement to live and let live.

Mr. Marshall has used Moscow's "undiplomatic" action in publishing the Notes as an excuse for slamming the door which the American Ambassador's message had opened. He refuses all bilateral discussion with Moscow, demanding conciliatory "action" on the Security Council. If that was all Mr. Marshall meant, why did he open the whole subject of American-Soviet relations and say that "the door was always open for discussion and settlement of our differences?" The conclusions drawn by ordinary people everywhere will be that those who are preparing for war in America have defeated sanity.

After all, all the world knows the situation. It is too late to argue who is most to blame for the peril in which we all stand. All that need be said is that the Soviet Union, fearing America, has consolidated her military, political and economic power over the Eastern European countries which were allotted to her as her sphere of influence at Yalta, and is encouraging revolutionary Communism all over the world; while the United States, fearing Communism, has occupied for strategic purposes bases which threaten the Soviet Union in Europe, the Mediterranean and the Pacific, and is carrying on in every country where Communism is a possibility, an anti-Communist campaign as virulent as the Communists' crusade. Both countries are now rapidly arming themselves for a third world war, which every expert agrees would complete the destruction of Europe, including these islands. How, then, can anyone in their senses not welcome the possibility of a settlement or at least an easing of the tension?

In England probably no one is pleased that this catastrophe has happened except the Foreign Office, which was annoyed that it was not kept informed of this American proposal and afraid that Marshall and Molotov might have bilateral conversations in which the interests of Britain and Western Europe would be sacrificed. *The Times*, clearly reflecting Foreign Office views, spoke of the "dangers" of such discussions. One of the dangers is that Stalin might announce a reversal of policy! To obtain that result was, we have always understood, the main object of recent diplomacy. What is the point of Western Union and an American "firm stand" against Russia, except to persuade Stalin to reverse his foreign policy? The second "danger" is that the Russians will "seek to bargain one area against another." Why not? Are we so satisfied about the position in Greece, Berlin, Austria, the Middle East or Korea that we are not willing to obtain a peaceful settlement in these areas by arranging for a Russian solution in some and a Western solution in others? If we are not prepared for some such bargain, what possible alternative is there except world war?

Mr. Bevin did not tell us. He is tired of conferring with Moscow — which is intelligible enough, but scarcely a reason for rejecting a hope of settlement. He was on strong ground in demurring to any conference for which no adequate preparation had been made. But that again was no argument for scouting a conference which the American Note had initiated. The world, including presumably Moscow, regarded the American Ambassador's message as the beginning of diplomatic discussion, not as an invitation to one of those impromptu and world-ranging conversations which were possible between Mr. Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill during the war. Could they not have chosen to discuss specified points of friction? Could not the Ministers, even now, reach agreement about Greece, where the recent massacres have shocked decent people everywhere, not least in America? Might not Stalin agree not to challenge a moderate government which Britain and America could set up in Athens in place of the savage reactionaries now installed there? Agreement could also be reached, we suggest, on Berlin and Austria. And there are other danger zones outside Europe where it might be helpful to have discussions based on the repeated statement of Mr. Marshall, that the interests of the Soviet Union are not endangered by America?

The hope of post-war peace always rested on the agreement of Stalin and Roosevelt that between these Great Powers there was no clash of material interests. Indeed, the needs of the Eastern and Western power blocs are complementary; Russia herself needs credits from America—perhaps the best trump in Mr. Marshall's hand. If the United States is sincere in saying that she has "by no means given up hope of finding a way to establish good and sensible relations between our two countries," then there is no alternative, as Mr. Churchill urged four months ago, to a return to "formal diplomatic processes, with all their privacy and gravity." Privacy, that is to say, in the detail of discussion. The subjects and objects of the diplomacy will be as public as the thunder-clouds overhead.

The Birth of a Nation

To-day, the Jewish State becomes the *de facto* sovereign of most of the area of Palestine allotted to it under the United Nations Partition Plan. Partition has been carried out by the Haganah, despite all difficulties, at a cost of about 3,000 Jewish, Arab and British lives. The Palestine Arabs offered virtually no resistance, and their Higher Committee has fled the country. The Mufti's pretensions to leadership have been deflated and Arab resistance to the U.N. proposals has been offered exclusively by professional soldiers imported from the neighbouring States. Indeed, most of the so-called Army of Liberation has deserted and begun the trudge home. Meanwhile, at Lake Success, half-hearted efforts to impose a truce continue, but even Mr. Creech-Jones must realise by now that the first Arab-Jewish war has already been fought and won, and that King Abdullah will be extremely wary of risking the existence of the Arab Legion by launching a second. The Haganah is now militarily strong enough to conquer the whole of Palestine, including Jerusalem, but the Jewish leaders are showing a sensible self-restraint in their hour of triumph. They realise that they cannot afford to sacrifice the basis of peace with the Arabs for the sake of prestige victories. Moreover, they know that military strength is not everything. The Jewish State, summarily excluded from the sterling bloc, and deprived of all the assets of the Palestine Government, has no finances apart from the sums collected by Zionists throughout the world. It is spending a million pounds a month on the war, and it must also provide cash at once for imports of meat, cereals and fats. Economically, it cannot survive a long period of hostilities with Transjordan, since the Jewish bankers in New York, though they will contribute from their personal incomes to a good cause, demand a sound security for any large-scale business investment. Similarly, King Abdullah cannot possibly launch an offensive against the Jews unless he is instructed to by his British advisers. The stage is set for a hard-headed settlement between the only two nations in the Middle East possessing modern military force.

The Grand Design

The Congress of Europe—that "remarkable adventure," as Mr. Churchill called it—ended in a welter of general consent to resolutions nicely calculated to bridge the differences between whole-hogging federalists and those who mean by "union" a loose league of States for certain common purposes, between Liberals and planners, between advocates of the defence of the West and supporters of aggressive political warfare against the East. The European Assembly, which national parliaments are to be asked to form by nomination of delegates, is "to advise upon measures to bring about the necessary economic and political union of Europe," in whose federation Germany is to be integrated, and whose social system is to be "democratic" and aimed at "freeing mankind from all types of slavery and from all economic insecurity." It is indeed a Grand Design; but though the variegated delegations at the Hague committed themselves enthusiastically to a far-reaching programme of economic planning, ranging from the abolition of obstacles in the way of trade to joint plans for agricultural development, the internal contest—Socialists *v.* The Rest—was resolved only by the drafting of a resolution which appears, on the face of it, to favour a mechanism for economic planning strangely suggestive of the corporate State. That the resolutions will lead to any immediate action by governments is unlikely; but the "continuing body" which is to be set up to promote "awareness of European unity" will doubtless strive to keep alive the fervent, if not very precise, hopes of the Congress. But is unity to be achieved only after the successful "liberation" of nations whose social system does not conform to the European Assembly's conception of democracy? Apart from the significant fact that Eastern European *émigrés* were accepted as full delegates to the Congress, Mr. Churchill made it clear that he is aiming at a unity "without limit" which will embrace the whole Continent.

Deadlock over Germany

Dissensions in the London Six-Power Conference on Germany have reached a critical deadlock which threatens the unity even of a more limited Western Union in Europe, and may impair the stability of the Government in Paris. The issue, for which no solution is yet in sight, relates, first and foremost, to the Ruhr. Here the French are insistent that their security is dependent on an effective international control, not merely over the allocation of Ruhr products available for export, but over the types and quantities of permissible Ruhr production. The American delegation, intent primarily on securing maximum output from the Ruhr, are apparently indifferent whether or not there is an element of *German* public control over the mines and the heavy industries, but are adamant against accepting any form of international control in which they do not exercise, as paymasters, the right to call the tune. That is, if there is to be any kind of international Board of Supervision in the Ruhr, they demand 75 per cent. of the voting power. In these circumstances the Conference has to choose between three courses of action—(a) postponement of the whole programme of political and economic rehabilitation of Western Germany, with the obvious risk of complete collapse next winter in all three Zones; (b) overruling French objections and imposing American plans on Trizonia, with the virtual certainty that the Schuman Government would be compelled to resign in favour of General de Gaulle; or (c) leaving the French Zone out of it, and going ahead with a Constituent Assembly, monetary reform and intensive industrial reconstruction, exclusively in Bizonia. If the last course were adopted, M. Schuman—provided he protested loudly enough—might survive; but, even so, what would be left of the unity which appeared to underlie the Treaty of Brussels?

Kashmir

Though neither side has so far expressed more than a half-hearted willingness even to consider Uno's suggested compromise, there are signs that the dangers of war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir are diminishing. At first each Dominion demanded an outright condemnation of the other from the world at large and Britain in particular. Now that this is manifestly not forthcoming, the practical necessity of ending this wasteful conflict is beginning to take effect. India has enough to cope with in Hyderabad without diverting any more of her energies to Kashmir. Pakistan's resources are so limited, and her economic position as yet so unsound, that complete estrangement from India is impossible to her. Hence the prevailing tendency towards inter-Dominion agreements on other matters, and the assertion of the Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan that the two Dominions are well able to work together in friendship. In the recent speeches of the various leaders there can be detected a tentative approach towards settlement. Both Dominions still hold that Uno is unreasonable, but both are prepared to receive the Good Offices Commission. Pakistan hopes that the Commission will find the plebiscite scheme impracticable. India, no doubt, still has a lingering hope that the Commission will label Pakistan as the sole cause of all the trouble. When the Commission starts work, it will find the snows melting and the inconclusive fighting on the increase. Its predominant sensation is likely to be that it is in the presence of an insoluble stalemate which will not allow of the holding of an orderly plebiscite. It may therefore recommend a division of the territory on the basis of the *status quo* with a plebiscite in the Vale of Kashmir.

Atomic Control Abandoned

On the thousandth day after the atom bo wiped out Nagasaki, the United Nations Ato Energy Commission decided to give up all prete of trying to find a means of control by internati agreement. This is the measure of the deteri tion of the world's political situation, because fact the A.E.C. discussions were not as futile all that. On the technical question of control experts had reached a substantial measure agreement. When the Technical Commit including Russian representatives, examined mechanics of the Lillienthal Report, at the outset of the Commission's work, they agre without prejudice to the political implicati that the measures were reasonably workable. was the politicians and the military who produ the impasse, though it was, it must be admit difficult to avoid. When the Baruch P dictated by U.S. military security, set out conditions, it was obvious that they must inacceptable to the U.S.S.R. America said, some justification: "We will not destroy, hand over the secrets of, the atomic bomb, until nations have accepted inspection." The Russia with equal justification, said: "We can agree to inspection, with its disclosure of military secrets, until the threat of the bomb been removed." Baruch succeeded in politic out-manoeuvring the Russians by making American proposals seem like a magnanim gesture of self-denial, while Gromyko's alterna proposals were just wishful Kelloggism. U.S.S.R. also had substantial economic reas for objecting to an Atomic Development Ad istration control by which the industrial adv tages to the U.S.S.R. through the use of ato power could be severely rationed. Within conception of national development, Russia progressively made concessions, including limi inspection. In all these deliberations Britain the junior partner in the Sacred Trust, has b conspicuously ineffective.

National Health Armistice

It is all over bar the shouting so far as Bevan and the B.M.A. are concerned. Representative Body of the doctors, which B.M.A. has still to call together, will cons the advice of the Council that doctors should g and work the National Health Service. endorsement is a foregone conclusion, because those doctors who disapproved of the Mini of Health's amended proposals cannot block Service when half the profession is prepared join and will, by default of the abstainers, co the patients. There was no particular virtu the Council's suggestion of co-operation, bec the plebiscite left no option. While 64 per c of those who voted disapproved of the nearly 50 per cent. opted to join the Serv Principle is one thing; ' practice is anot The only basis on which the B.M.A. c effectively resist was if it secured a clear majo of 13,000 family doctors refusing to enter Service. Actually the G.P. majority was than 1,000. The B.M.A. Council has reope negotiations with the Minister of Health, bu has made it quite clear that the issues mus strictly confined to the terms of the Amendm and that he will not consider new issues. will baulk any attempt to delay, as the Chair of the B.M.A. Council, Dr. Guy Dain, wi to do, the introduction of the Service for months. Meanwhile Local Executives in e district are recruiting doctors for the Ser and its smooth introduction will depend on quickly the doctors and the public respond. way of ensuring that the doctors co-operat for patients to ask their family practitioner accept them on the public register. Onl foolhardy doctor will turn away his patients

PARLIAMENT: Oil

Wednesday

GREECE is a raw spot in the Labour Party's conscience. Nor could it be soothed by the unction of a legalistic Foreign Office reply to Chetwynd's question about the recent shootings. The great majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party has an instinctive certainty that the execution in a few days of one hundred and fifty-seven people, whatever their crimes or political demerits, is the act of a bad Government. Only the other week, members were congratulating each other on the abolition of the death penalty. On Monday, they listened uneasily to a rather half-hearted explanation by the Minister of State why Greek criminals, sentenced to death by their captors after a civil war, had to be kept for three years before being executed.

Hector McNeil was in the dilemma of having to express the repugnance of the British Government at reprisals and mass executions, while at the same time not undermining the prestige of the Greek Government. When he mentioned that the Greek Prime Minister had been warned, the Tories looked glum and the Socialists pleased. But he restored the balance rapidly by saying to Ronald Chamberlain that it was "unfair to call (the happenings) mass executions . . . The figures . . . do not add up to that." Whether he called the shootings mass executions or merely batch executions, he left the Labour benches in no doubt that what had taken place in Greece was a Balkan butchery.

For the remainder of the day, the House dealt with the Motor Spirit (Registration) Bill, and the black-marketing of petrol. This was the opportunity for the lawyers to unbutton themselves—the Tories, led by Manningham-Buller and Boyd-Carpenter, seeking to mitigate the penalties, in face of the Attorney General's anxiety for them to be deterrent. When Shawcross was winding up his reply to an amendment by Boyd-Carpenter with an amiable jibe about the Tories trying to convert the Bill into a "Spiv's Charter," Prescott interrupted to ask whether he was speaking for his Rolls-Bentley.

There was a moment of general embarrassment as the Attorney General rose to his feet. Was it right, was it relevant for Prescott to use a personal argument? Was it accurate? he asked. (The Labour back-benchers waited in excruciating uncertainty as he gently put Prescott into position.) Then came the upper-cut, "I do not and could not possibly own a Rolls-Bentley. I own an 8 horse-power Ford and a Wolseley," he said. Prescott went white. "But you once did . . . ," he mumbled. "I only wish I had," said the Attorney General. The Tory front bench, who know bad form when they see it, looked stiffly ahead as though Prescott didn't belong to them.

It is hardly likely that Hinchingbrooke, had he been present, would have thought more highly of the Attorney General for his disavowal, since in the Oil debate he declared that "wealth is a better test of social and economic value than anything else." With his hankering for the nineteenth-century heyday of *laissez-faire*, when the classes knew their place, Hinchingbrooke is the youngest Victorian in the House. His Conservative idealism encourages him to soar; but his wings never carry him beyond the upper flights of mediocrity.

Far different from Hinchingbrooke's *fainéant* tactic was the blunt and practical speech of Alfred Robens. In reply to Hudson's anecdotal lament that there was a world scarcity of petrol, and that the Government wouldn't increase the ration, the Parliamentary Secretary made one of the most robust and well-constructed speeches delivered by a Junior Minister for some time.

There was one striking omission in the debate. Whereas in the past the Labour Party has always kept a careful eye on the private foreign policies of the oil companies, hardly a speaker referred to the need for co-ordinating their activities with the public interest. Cuthbert, the Tory Member for Rye, who made a Government-sponsored trip to the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Iran a year and a half ago, championed the Oil Industry against Government interference, but said that the Government should have a greater interest in the oil companies. Socialists would say: "A complete interest."

MAURICE EDELMAN

THOUGHTS FOR SCARBOROUGH

How many of the Labour Party delegates who begin their Annual Conference next Monday will remember the almost carefree mood of their rendezvous at Margate just a year ago? Those were the days before the convertibility crisis and Marshall Aid. Mr. Bevin was still denouncing as traitors the advocates of the Third Force and Western Union. The Treasury was in its Daltonian phase of fiscal policy, confident that the fuel crisis was only an unfortunate consequence of the British weather, that the American loan would last well into 1950, and that no cuts in either the Armed Forces or the standard of living were necessary. At Margate, inflation was a Tory heresy, and austerity a rather gloomy concept employed by a not very popular President of the Board of Trade.

Before two months had passed almost every major Conference decision had been reversed by history. Out of the July crisis Sir Stafford Cripps emerged as the intellectual master of the Cabinet, selected his team of Ministers, and introduced at long last the cuts and the planning which his colleagues had considered unnecessary for their "Socialism without tears."

These recollections should at least warn the delegates at Scarborough that burning issues may be totally irrelevant a few weeks after they have been debated. The real task of the Labour Party is neither to make a number of snap decisions nor even to compose a programme for the next election, but to re-think its basic philosophy in the light of the experience of the last three years. Here a special responsibility lies on the National Executive and the Cabinet Ministers who address the Conference. Whatever melodrama may be staged about the Nenni telegram, the platform will be threatened neither by dangers of schism nor by rival claimants for power. With an election in prospect, the Party always draws together; and Members of Parliament and constituency parties alike—whether rebellious or submissive—find a common interest in defeating the Tories. The atmosphere, therefore, will be one in which even the most cautious leadership can afford to broach dangerous topics and to touch on unpalatable truths.

The plain fact is that the Labour Party is reaching the end of the road which it first set itself to traverse in 1918, and then mapped out in full detail in *Let Us Face the Future*. With the exception of steel, which will be a critical issue in the next session, it has nationalised those basic industries which were most obviously suitable. It has put on the Statute Book its all-in plan of social security, and is now faced with the humdrum job of creating the administration for it and smoothing out the anomalies. Most important of all, a Labour Government has given the country the first period of full employment in peacetime since 1914.

These are solid achievements, especially when we remember that they were accomplished in a world rent by ideological war and burdened by the weight of rearmament. The Conference can afford to dwell on them with real pride. But what next? Does the Party see its second Five Years in terms of a large further dose of nationalisation? Does it believe that full employment can be maintained without a national wages policy, when American aid dries up? Does it believe that a stable trade balance can be achieved by the present export drive and the development of bilateralism? Or does it accept the federalist creed that the only solution of our trade problems, and the only way of creating a unit in which planning is possible, is to merge our identity in the United States of Europe? These are some of the questions which should be raised at Scarborough, not by delegates limited to five hurried minutes at the rostrum, but by the Cabinet Ministers on the platform. They cannot, of course, be answered in Conference. But it is vital that this year, in contrast with last year, the Party should be told frankly about the problems which confront it and encouraged not only to look back along the trail which it has covered, but forward to the new and trackless country which lies before it.

Up till now the Labour Party has developed without any very clear philosophy. It could afford this, so long as Britain remained, or seemed to remain, a first-class industrial Power. Strength, as the U.S.A. shows us to-day, reduces the need for thought about first principles. "*Sum: ergo non cogito.*"

To-day it is the position of Great Britain as a nation that is in question. The continued survival, with a decent standard of living, of 45 million people on this island is no longer a premise which every Power takes for granted in formulating its policy, but a matter for debate in which the conclusions reached by the Labour Party may decisively affect the issue. It was sufficient to be righteously anti-Imperialist in an epoch when British Imperialism seemed impregnably strong. It was sufficient to preach nationalisation as the single panacea for all our ills so long as British industry was making profits and the only question was: should they be made for the few or for the many? But to-day, when Britain has been replaced as the main world Power by two rival empires, and British industry, whether under public or private ownership, cannot achieve a trade balance, many old Socialist arguments are out of date. What is needed in order to face the future is not merely a skilfully concocted election programme, but a Socialist philosophy based on a fresh and unprejudiced analysis of the difficulties that confront us.

Domestically, most urgent is the problem of incentives in the unsocialised sector of industry. In a post-war period of scarcity, it was inevitable that detailed controls should be maintained despite their frustrating effect on initiative. But both Mr. Wilson and Mr. Strachey have already found that in certain limited cases—*e.g.*, in retail distribution—maximum prices and rigid licensing of suppliers may actually impede the cheapening of products to the consumer. Controls imposed on scarcity are not synonymous with Socialism.

And from this it follows that, wherever possible, the secondary industries should be given the greatest possible freedom—including the freedom to go bankrupt. It is vitally important that the Labour Party should dispose once for all of the idea that Socialists regard as more than a temporary expedient those schemes of price-fixing and controls which permit the incompetent to make some profit and the competent to make excessive profits, and make bankruptcy virtually impossible. The principle should be established that nationalisation is not yet another form of control, but the most effective way of abolishing controls and enabling the Government to plan production without bureaucratic interference. The nationalisation of steel, for instance, should lessen the administrative friction of the Steel Control—now an irritating interference with many secondary industries.

The desirability of further schemes of nationalisation should be argued broadly according to this principle. Their justification is that they are essential for a planned and expanding economy which stimulates true initiative and enterprise. It is by arguing the Socialist case in these terms and not by watering it down, that the Labour Party can hope to regain the support of some at least of the professional and technical classes which have been alienated since 1945. What these electors demand is not a retreat from planning, but an assurance that, while serving the needs of society, it gives a chance for initiative, scientific research and modern management techniques which monopoly capitalism denies.

Here domestic and foreign policies merge. The delegates at Scarborough will do well to keep one question in the forefront of their minds. Can a British planned economy survive, in a Two-Bloc world, except as part of a larger European unit?

THE ITALIAN SOCIALISTS

In the newly elected Italian Chamber of Deputies which assembled on May 8th there are 33 representatives of Socialist Unity (the Right-wing Socialist group led by Saragat and Lombardo) and 36 Socialists of the Popular Front. Their total represents less than two-thirds of the 115 Deputies of the Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity who were elected to the old Chamber in June 1946. Yet the number of Socialist sympathisers in Italy to-day is probably as high as, if not higher than, it was at that date.

Such are the bare facts and the apparent contradictions of the fate which has befallen Italian Socialism. It is a fate which must give pleasure to the extremists of both Right and Left. Yet the picture is not wholly black. The Socialists of the Saragat and Lombardo groups have confounded their critics who maintained that they commanded no working-class support. And the Nenni Socialists have been forced to take notice of the plight created by their misguided leadership. Indeed there seems every reason to hope that, provided the leaders of both wings show a mutual forbearance and understanding, a strong and unified Socialist Party may before very long rise from the ashes of bitter experience to carry on its fight for a progressive and prosperous Italy.

In order to appraise the Socialist position in Italy to-day it is necessary to recapitulate the events which have brought Nenni to the abyss which now faces him. The dilemma of the Italian Socialists has been essentially the dilemma which so many European Socialists have had to face during the past two years. Which was preferable? To co-operate with the Communists in order to preserve the unity of the working-classes and to present a united front against the forces of reaction (in Italy the Catholic Church and the neo-Fascists)? This—especially after the Czech example—looked like going for a ride on the tiger. Or to co-operate with the moderate Right, at the expense of working-class unity and at the risk of giving Fascism another chance? Nenni chose the first course. Saragat the second. And when in January 1947 he broke with Nenni and formed his own Socialist Party, 50 Socialist deputies went with him, although almost the entire base of the Party remained faithful to Nenni.

A year later, at his Party's National Congress in January 1948, Nenni made an error of judgment which has had for him disastrous effects. The main issue to be decided was whether or not the Party should present unified lists with the Communists in the elections. Before the motion was put to the vote all, with the exception of a small group led by Lombardo (who forthwith seceded), agreed to conform to the ruling of the majority. About 400,000 voted for unified lists and 300,000 (comprising a broad section of the Party) for autonomous lists. A new Party Executive Committee was formed (unconstitutionally, so some affirm) almost entirely from those who had voted for unified lists. There followed the uncompromising attitude of the Party delegates at the International Socialist Conference at London in March. It was clear that the Party had aligned itself on the side of the East against the West, and there was some grumbling among those who had voted for autonomous lists.

Apprehension increased as the electioneering campaign advanced and it became evident to many Socialists that the Communists had almost complete control of the Front's electoral machine. Togliatti made speeches rich in vitriolic abuse of De Gasperi, of American aid, of European collaboration. Surprisingly, he made few constructive suggestions as to how the Front hoped to improve the existing order. The propaganda line was obviously that of the Cominform. Meanwhile Socialist Unity, (formed by Saragat Socialists and the groups of Silone and Lombardo), backed by a clear-cut, progressive programme and messages of goodwill from Morgan Phillips and various European Socialist parties, was having considerable success with its electioneering campaign, particularly in the north.

The electoral victory of the Christian Democrats who, with 48.7% of the total votes, gained an absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies was a bitter disappointment to the Front. In fact De Gasperi's victory was gained almost entirely at the expense of the extreme Right, whose votes dropped from 18.6% in 1946 to 10.4%. The Left (Front, 30.6%; Socialist Unity, 7.1%) polled only 2% fewer of the votes than they had done in 1946 (Socialists, 20.7%; Communists, 19%). The Front secured 182 seats and Socialist Unity 33.

The electoral system, though roughly proportional, is slightly biased in favour of the bigger parties, or Socialist Unity would have secured more seats with their 2 million votes. Even so, they have reason to be pleased with their success. It is significant that a high percentage of their votes came from the industrial cities of the north where they have undoubtedly gained considerable support among the factory workers.

The final blow came to Nenni's supporters with the announcement of the distribution of seats between Socialists and Communists within the Front. Of the 182 seats won by the Front, 140 have fallen to Communists, 6 to Independents and only 36 to Nenni Socialists. To secure its 182 seats the Front polled just over 8 million votes. In the 1946 elections the Socialists polled 4.75 million and the Communists 4.35 million votes. Assuming that, of Socialist Unity's 2 million votes, 1.75 million came from voters who had previously voted Socialist (the remainder coming, it seems reasonable to suppose, from Left-wing Liberals, ex-Action Party members and others), the Nenni Socialists might still have been expected to receive at least three million votes. (This figure allows for an increased Communist poll of 650,000.) Indeed the Nenni Socialists with whom I have discussed the question are of the opinion that they were responsible for more than 50 per cent. of the Front votes, i.e., more than 4 million. To them, therefore, the allocation of only 36 of the Front's 182 seats must appear a monstrous injustice.

It is little credit to Nenni that he failed to see that within the Front the "preferential vote system" must act strongly in favour of the party with the more rigid discipline, i.e., the Communists. Under the Italian electoral system each voter votes first of all for a Party. Then, if he so chooses, he may place three candidates on his Party list in order of preference. In practice many voters fail to exercise this right. It was easy for the Communists, whose votes come mostly from Party members, to instruct each of their potential supporters to whom to give his preferential vote. In the Socialist Party, on the other hand, with its less rigid discipline and higher proportion of non-member sympathisers, many preference votes were probably either not used or were dispersed among a much wider number of candidates.

It is partly as a result of this method of apportioning seats within the Front that the Communists now have 140 deputies as opposed to 104 in the old Chamber. Their preponderance over the Socialists has shattered one of the favourite arguments of Nenni's more sanguine supporters. These used to argue that the relative strength of their deputies *vis-à-vis* the Communists would be sufficient to ensure that a victory for the Front would not follow the pattern of events in Czechoslovakia.

During the week after the elections I talked in Rome with prominent Socialists of various shades of opinion. As the week progressed, opinion gathered among Nenni Socialists that their Party must quickly regain complete autonomy or face disintegration. On April 25th, Romita, who represents the Right-wing of the Nenni autonomists, presided over a meeting of his supporters. He criticised the present directorate of the Party, and a resolution was approved calling for the early convocation of a national congress of the Party to discuss future policy.

Discontent, however, is not confined to Romita's Right-wing group. Perhaps conscious of this, the inner executive of the Party, including Nenni a the Party Secretary, Basso, immediately aft Romita's meeting, decided to summon a meeti of the National Council on May 15th to discu the convocation of an extraordinary natio congress.

It is always rash to prophesy, particularly in country such as Italy where political personaliti count for so much. But it now seems likely th Nenni's Socialist Party will shortly make a bre with the Communists, thus opening the door f a reconciliation at a later date with Socialist Uni In the meantime Saragat and Lombardo w probably enter De Gasperi's government. Perha later they may join with the reorientated Ne Socialists to form that united Socialist opposit which could do so much to rally the progressi element of the country which both resents t Communists and distrusts a Government representative of vested interests and cleri reaction.

The chances of this Socialist reconciliati depend chiefly on two contingencies. Can t leaders of the various groups resolve th differences? There is still, among the supporte of Nenni, much distrust of Saragat. They s maintain, and there is a measure of logic on th side, that it was he who started all their difficult by splitting the Party at an inopportune mome The man most qualified to bridge these differen is Lombardo who, while co-operating wi Saragat, has not joined the latter's Socialist Par The second contingency concerns the Socia rank and file. Will they, if asked, follow th leaders into a new unified Socialist Party? will they instead turn to the Communists? T answer must depend on Socialist ability to wo for a programme of genuine social and econom reform.

JOHN MILLER

A LONDON DIARY

In days of lavish newsprint, popular new papers picked out in bold type the news th suited their purpose, but often included, in unobtrusive fashion, some matter that was helpful to their political line. To-day the sho age of newsprint gives a sufficient excuse f abandoning even the pretence of fair reporti Thus when the Prime Minister devotes thre quarters of a speech to attacking the Tories a puts in a few anti-Communist paragraphs, that the public learns is that Mr. Attlee has co out hot and strong against the Left. And t wise boys know well that Labour will not bene as perhaps Transport House imagines, by t Premier's attack on the Communists. On t contrary, the result is to make the dubious vo go "Right"; he decides that, while Attlee a Bevin may be good fellows, all Leftists, incl ing the Labour rank and file, are dangero If the Communists are to be suppressed, a T Prime Minister, they think, is likely to do job better than Mr. Attlee. Take another c of press selectivity. Mr. Harold Wilson has peatedly told the country some very remarka facts which I have not yet seen reported in of the national newspapers. How difficult it to make people realise how much our standa for the whole country have risen since pre- days! People complain now about the difficu of supplying their children with shoes. The is that the number of children's shoes sold in country is actually fifty per cent. greater tha was before the war. And the quality is actu better, too. In short, we have completely gotten that before the war there were somew between one million and three million un ployed families which could seldom afford to children's shoes at all. Let me call the atten of the Press Commission to a third remark example. Last week the newspapers carri wonderful front-page story of a bungalow Bracknell, Berkshire, which was to be pu down by order of the bureaucrats. It certa sounded pretty absurd, and the story was s ported by the fact that the local workers

ery naturally refused to demolish the building, nd that Mr. Silkin had intervened to put a stop demolition pending an inquiry. As the results the inquiry are not yet published, my only mment shall be that any newshound, who anted to report a full story, could easily have scovered that this was not a case of bureaucracy n mad or of demolishing a house because its uilder had not complied with the formalities of d tape. The Council had long been fighting to op huts being built and sold on a piece of waste round where there are no sanitary services or ther amenities, and where, in the past, mugs ave been persuaded to buy at high prices for mmediate occupation huts that in a few years rn into slums.

* * *

By an unfortunate misprint, I last week quoted ir John Boyd Orr as saying the population of he world had grown by one million since the utbreak of the war. The figure should, of ourse, have been one hundred millions. This rmidable increase shows how wrong Malthus as in regarding war as an important check on opulation and how right he was in thinking hat the human animal tends to breed up to the mit of subsistence, at least in countries where he standard of living is low. The most rapid creases in population occur in Asiatic countries. India, for instance, the Malthusian rule is still erfectly illustrated; the standard of living has ot been improved by British rule, because any conomic and hygienic advances have been offset y an increase in the population. For a reason hat I have never seen adequately explained, this as not been the case in Burma, where the popuation is only 17 millions, and the standard of ving persistently higher than it is in India. Later arriage and a more malignant type of malaria ave been suggested to me as possible explanaons. Indeed, I see it suggested that general e of the new drug, paludrine, which was used ith great success during the war to prevent alaria, might increase the population and so duce the standard of living in Burma. But all is leaves out the great nineteenth-century disvery that Malthus was wrong in thinking that ere comes a point in economic improvement which the law of population and subsistence longer holds good. Economic progress may so rapid—as it was for the middle-class in nineenth-century England—that people who had beore been fatalists begin deliberately to limit their milies. The answer, therefore, to the popula-on problem, as presented by Sir John Boyd Orr, not only to save our soil from erosion, to conrve our resources, and increase our food supy and industrial production. If the world is fully benefit by this planned Socialism—for that is hat it comes to—the change must be so rapid d purposeful that the masses everywhere, and t only in the already industrialised West—gin to be hopeful about maintaining their new mforts and therefore to decide on smaller and althier families.

* * *

Many people will recall the name of Professor ady, author of *The Spirit and Structure of rman Fascism*. In America he is better known a scientist who was smeared before the Dies mmittee, demanded a full inquiry by the B.I., was completely vindicated, but who was vertheless effectively prevented from doing his . The story, as it was told to me, is interesting. ring the war Professor Brady, who was then head of the Quality Section of O.P.A., was tructed to look into methods of oil and petrol nomy. Research seemed to indicate that tens thousands of tons of oil could be saved each r if motorists, instead of changing the oil in ir engines every thousand miles, left it there much longer periods. Careful analysis ealed that the oil was at its best after a thousand es, the point where the oil companies recomnded a change. Even after five thousand, the if carefully filtered, could be used again, hout any harm to the engine. Professor Brady also discovered that the fleets of lorries operated by the oil companies did not change their oil after a thousand miles. When the evidence had been sifted, O.P.A. put out a press release advising motorists of the results of the investigation, and asking them to help the country and their own purses by changing the oil in their engines less often. A few weeks later Professor Brady was indicted by the Dies Committee as a crypto-Communist; and there are reasons for believing that *post hoc* in this case was *propter*. Extracts from his book on German Fascism were put in as evidence against him; all reference to its publication in America was withheld from the Committee, which was told that it was written for a foreign underground Communist organisation (The Left Book Club!). The story is interesting as a side light on American politics. It also raises a query about this country. The Government is desperately concerned to cut down its imports of oil. But the conscientious motorist, who follows the handbook supplied with his car, still changes his oil every thousand miles. Does the O.P.A. advice apply in British conditions? It has been suggested to me that the small British engine, with a very high rate of revolutions, may have a different oil consumption and may make the oil grittier than the big American car. But the Minister of Fuel and Power should make a careful investigation. I suspect that, if he does, he will discover that the change every thousand miles is a relic of the Golden Age, when motor fuel flowed like water and the question was not how to cut consumption down, but how to keep it up.

* * *

A curious story of one way of turning spears into pruning-hooks comes from an acquaintance who recently accompanied a number of German teachers on a visit to a Scottish country school. Through the windows of the school the visitors could see the girders of the Forth Bridge, first major target of the Luftwaffe. But more interesting to the visiting teachers than that great bridge or even the splendid sweep of the Firth of Forth were the school air-raid shelters. They had to have shelters, the headmaster explained, being so near the naval base. Then he gave his guests a modest demonstration of how to fit national schemes to local circumstances. When he was consulted about the siting of the shelters, he had them conveniently placed on the edge of the school garden. Then he persuaded the architect to build them with window-frames temporarily blocked up with bricks. When the war was over, the senior boys knocked out the bricks and built in windows. And now one of the shelters is fitted up as a workshop with an electric drill, a lathe and a forge; the other houses various kinds of machinery—a bicycle, a hay-mower, a binder, a motor-bicycle, and a four-cylinder tractor engine. There the boys learn repair and maintenance. All the work, except the leading-in of the electric cables, was done by the boys.

* * *

It is surely one of the oddest and least expected consequences of nationalisation that tipping should have come back on the railways. It is even odder that this should have happened in such a way as to provoke a threat of strike action from the railway refreshment staff. The trouble, which affects other catering establishments and not only the railways, arose out of an award by the Catering Wages Board. It raised wages but also had the effect of ending the service charge of 10 per cent. which used to be put on the bill as a substitute for private tipping. Under the new regime, this service charge is being replaced by a surcharge which is not distributed among the staff, but is used to meet the higher cost of the new wage. The customer, therefore, is now called on both to pay the surcharge and to tip, if the workers are not to suffer; for, at any rate on the railways, the workers complain that the wage-increase is much less than they used to receive as their shares of the service charge. For the moment there is much confusion, with some customers tipping, at widely varying rates, and others refusing to tip on top of the surcharge. If the surcharge is now retained by the management, instead of being shared out, how does it stand in relation to the maximum charge laid down for restaurant meals? Does it mean a raising or an evasion of the limit? And, if it is true that the new wage rates give the workers much less than the old service charges, what is the rate at which the customer ought to tip in order to give the staff a square deal? In any case tipping and public ownership are ill bed-fellows.

* * *

It was only when we heard on the wireless that the Russians had celebrated the third anniversary of V.E. Day as a purely Russian victory that we recalled that there was any such anniversary. The French had rejoicings and so did other nations. But for some odd reason the British seem just to have forgotten all about it. It seems in the present state of the world not at all a bad thing to forget.

CRITIC

UNO'S LITTLE WAR

As it stands, the Uno decision is a direct incitement to both sides to accomplish their ends by force.
—NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, Dec. 6, 1947.

UNO sits in council in the courts of Lake Success,
Guardian of world-wide peace in constant readiness,
Uno summons Britain to lay her Mandate down,
Britain has surrendered the Mandate of the Crown.
Uno in the courts of peace her lordship terminates,
Palestine henceforth shall be two independent States;
Spheres of Jew and Arab new Charters will define,
And Uno's full majority approve the Grand Design.

End *Pax Britannica*,
Shield of Arabia!
Fiat Justitia!
And peace in Palestine!

Peace shall come to Palestine that knew not peace before
(Members of the Arab League have called a Holy War)
Britain will evacuate with all convenient haste,
Mandatory power is on Uno firmly based;
Guardians of world-wide peace will send a token force,
Lest settlement should be deferred till strife has run its course,
Armies of the Middle Powers as sentinels will stand
And peacefully transition bring that peacefully is planned.

Strife at a word will cease,
Force will secure the peace,
Uno will send police
To guard the Holy Land.

Chaos and confusion in the halls of Lake Success—
Uno token forces have been vetoed by U.S.;
Uno in committee votes a Council of Trustees
(Arab bands are face to face with Zion's Maccabees)
Palestine trusteeship by division is delayed;
Pilgrims are appointed for the Uno peace crusade!
Charters lodged at Lake Success appeals to arms condemn,
Lonely pilgrims are despatched the tide of war to stem.

Pilgrims come under Fire!
(Who against peace conspire?)
Pilgrims in haste retire
From doomed Jerusalem.

Palestine is on the eve, the sands are running out,
Courts of peace at Lake Success resound to Uno's rout,
Uno meets defiance from the greatest to the least,
The framework of world-wide peace excludes the Middle East.
No peaceable transition plan the Nations can produce,
No cease fire in the Holy Land, no Holy City truce,
No flag above Jerusalem to save the sacred shrine,
But Uno flees in full retreat before the battle line.

Forward, the Haganah!
Forward, Arabia!
No *Pax Britannica*,
And war in Palestine!

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.

Paste entries on a postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

The Bishop of Winchester . . . suggested that there would be fewer murders if private enterprise was not diverted from its legitimate channels.—*Daily Worker.* (J. R. Stewart.)

To ask for Divine guidance when you know the decisions you are going to take have already been taken not with Divine guidance, but with the help of Transport House, is nothing short of ridiculous and savours of the rankest hypocrisy.—Report of speech in *Beckenham Journal.* (W. J. Courcouf.)

If, as he said in one of his two books of reminiscences, he found the South African war "a sahib's war with just enough danger to make occasions exciting and great possibilities of sport," this was perhaps less than the truth.—*The Times.* (N. Townley.)

The Great Wall of China, built between B.C. 228-210, is the oldest wall extant. In its own class, a Bronco toilet roll is also the longest lasting because it contains approximately 700 sheets . . . *hundreds more than the average.*—Advertisement. *The Times.* (J. D. Mowat.)

Animal Lover wanted to share work of small modern house on bus route. 2 in family. Can bring own bitch.—Advert. in *Daily Telegraph.*

Because a person refuses to sing "God Save the King" he is not necessarily a Communist, because he may be unable to sing at all. If a person parodies the song and deliberately omits our God and our King, then he must, of necessity, become a Communist.—Letter in *Lincolnshire Echo.*

CANTANKERY—I

Not long ago I was described in a popular newspaper as "a cantankerous man"; much to my astonishment (and to the mixed amusement and indignation of my family), for I consider myself an easy, good-humoured fellow. Like most men of my queer trade, I am vain rather than massively conceited, and so am quickly wounded. No doubt I have a hair-trigger sense of grievance. One wrong look, one dubious intonation—and you are out with me, though never for long. But cantankerous? I would prefer to call myself an exasperated man, who glares at the antics of the world and cannot decide whether to laugh or to cry. But I will not give myself the benefit of the doubt, so what we have here are the impatient observations of a cantankerous man, so much *Cantankery.*

For instance, it seems to me that we are now in the middle of *Allies through the Looking-Glass.* We are in the Looking-Glass Wood, and it is darkening rapidly. Tweedledum and Tweedledee are at it again, and our ears are ringing with "Nohow!" and "Contrariwise!" Soon they will be putting on their armour. If I could only convince myself that this life is nothing but a dream, that the agony of millions is of no more importance than the shaking of reeds by the wind, how uproariously comic it would be, this coming battle between "Nohow!" and "Contrariwise!" Unfortunately I cannot help feeling that this world and this life have a certain, if limited, reality.

Remembering Dum and Dee, let us call these angry noisy characters, our men of power and their professional propagandists, the Tweedles. It does not matter much whether they are American soap manufacturers, Communist Party bosses, British trade union leaders; we can lump them together as Tweedles. And it is my contention that these people, for all their "Nohow!" and "Contrariwise!" share a common outlook, a Tweedle view of this life. And the grim joke is that the rest of us, who pay—and how we pay!—for the Tweedles, do not really share this view. We do not want what they want. On the other hand, we want something that most of them do not even know is there. These important facts may not be generally recognised, if only because too many folk are now lost and bewildered in the Looking-Glass Wood; but some sort of dim recognition of them haunts people's minds, and this explains what secretly worries the Tweedles, namely, the lack of enthusiasm everywhere, the boredom that is creeping from Surbiton to San Francisco.

There is, for example, this great Tweedle quarrel about democracy. Who has it? Is the Pink, Red, Purple or Blue the real thing? Let us set fire to a hundred cities to find the answer. And all the time the whole Tweedle world is moving away from democracy as fast as it can go. If more and more power is being concentrated into fewer and fewer hands, then where is democracy? If the individual citizen controls less and less of his own life, if personal responsibility dwindles, then how can democracy, Pink, Red or Blue, be triumphant? The fact is, of course, that real democracy is disappearing from the earth.

The Tweedles are men of power. They do not shrink from but enjoy the acquisition and exercise of power. And it is only in the Looking-Glass Wood that the ordinary citizen is making a choice between *Nohow* liberty and *Contrariwise* slavery. In the real world he is simply being dictated to and controlled more and more by Tweedles. The methods differ, but the broad results are the same. Elmer J. Tweedle, with his vast wealth, his newspapers and magazines, his radio programmes, neatly conditions his fellow countrymen from dawn until midnight. Comrade Tweedle issues directives, deciding everything from the size of families to the slow movements of symphonies. Even Sir Westminster Tweedle, though less blatant and impudent in his exercise of power than some of the others, is deciding every day how you and I shall live. Nor does he ask us our opinion first. True, in 1950 we can vote for Lord Tweedle and banish Sir Westminster, but Lord Tweedle lives in the same world and will behave in the same fashion—or worse, like his friend Elmer J.

Thirty-five years ago I was a half-baked wool clerk, to whom a couple of shillings meant a glorious night out. Now I am a successful professional man, well known and almost equally well disliked in many countries. Yet I declare solemnly that I controlled a much larger area of my own life then than I do now. I feel far more helpless now than I did thirty-five years ago. For all my years and weight I am shoved around far more now than I was then. This is not because we have a Labour Government, or because I do not live in New York or Moscow. Strike me pink, red or blue, it would be just the same. The power-seekers and power-holders have moved further in, and what I call democracy has moved further out. And the Looking-Glass Wood is crammed with people screaming about Liberty who would not know what to do with any liberty if they had it. If we are not careful we shall all die for a democracy to which we secretly said Good-bye years ago. Why not quarrel about the Dodo?

Again, all the Tweedles are alike in ignoring the terrifying new problems, which concern the welfare of our whole species, and in concentrating upon cosy little old problems, history-book stuff, dusty among Foreign Office archives. Shall Russia have a warm-water port? What about the Greeks? Every Tweedle, with his whole staff of experts, is familiar with these questions. But how many Tweedles ever listen to Sir John Boyd Orr? How many care about the frightening problem of the world's food. During the last ten years the population of this planet has been increasing at the rate of 17,000,000 a year. Even Europe, in spite of the War, has at least 21,000,000 more inhabitants than it had in 1939. At her present rate of increase India alone in less than another hundred years will have a population [illegible] 900,000,000. How are all these people to b[illegible] adequately fed? Arable land is not multiplyin[illegible] itself. Indeed, soon there may be less of i[illegible] We seem to make more deserts than we irrigat[illegible] Moreover, medical science is now saving millio[illegible] from pestilence only to bring them within th[illegible] reach of famine. We are all hurrying as fast [illegible] we can go—and busy quarrelling about academ[illegible] issues—towards the Great Hunger.

Even if the world food supply were certain f[illegible] the next hundred years, I would not want t[illegible] waste time trying to decide if Elmer J. Tweed[illegible] is really more democratic than Comrade Tweedl[illegible] But when we are all hastening towards starvatio[illegible] when it is touch-and-go whether whole continen[illegible] might not be turned into vast Belsens, when w[illegible] are almost within sight of the reproachful glar[illegible] of our hollow-eyed great-grandchildren, I wond[illegible] if I ought to laugh or to cry at such outrageo[illegible] Tweedlery. We are all in an open boat with [illegible] leaky water-tank, there are tigers in the dinin[illegible] room and molten lava in the back garden, and w[illegible] are all snarling at each other because we cann[illegible] decide which set of psychological misfits w[illegible] prefer. You can take Dum or Dee: give m[illegible] ham and eggs. (But nobody will). Find m[illegible] a Tweedle who will talk not about bombs b[illegible] *bombes*, those delicious confections that are alread[illegible] a fading memory. If we were in our right mind[illegible] we should be asking now *Who Has The Bombes*[illegible]

There must be a further instalment of the[illegible] cantankerous meditations.

J. B. Priestley

WANTED — AN AGRICULTURAL POLICY—I

We are now witnessing a second agricultur[illegible] revolution. Just as the co-operative subsisten[illegible] farming of the medieval open fields was displac[illegible] by the enclosed capitalist farming of the nineteen[illegible] century, so capitalist farming in its turn is n[illegible] being superseded by a new system, the produ[illegible] of a combination of technical and econom[illegible] developments, which is characterised by t[illegible] increasing intervention of the State in the actu[illegible] processes of food-production. This trend to[illegible] nationalised agriculture seems to me unmistakab[illegible] it is likely to continue, whatever the politi[illegible] complexion of the party in power may prove to b[illegible] A Labour Government will naturally encoura[illegible] and, as far as possible, accelerate the process [illegible] transition to socialisation, but it has a furth[illegible] duty, distinguishing it from the Opposition, [illegible] humanise and democratise the new system. [illegible] the moment, the 1860's, the so-called Golden A[illegible] of English farming, bask in a sentimental glo[illegible] the brutality of their labour-gangs and th[illegible] starvation wages are conveniently forgotten. [illegible] the sentimentalists aren't entirely wrong; ev[illegible] Tennyson's Northern Farmer, "new styl[illegible] had his virtues. So a Socialist agriculture m[illegible] not only be more efficient than its capital[illegible] predecessor, it must also offer those engaged i[illegible] a fuller and fairer way of life.

The two long-term objectives, then, that m[illegible] be the basis of a Socialist agricultural policy a[illegible] I suggest, (i) the gradual nationalisation of [illegible] whole production-consumption cycle, at least [illegible] to the retail stage, and (ii) the democratisation [illegible] its structure. In so far as a specific propo[illegible] marks a step towards the fulfilment of th[illegible] objectives, it is, other things being equal, a go[illegible] proposal. Here is a simple test that I comm[illegible] to Mr. Tom Williams, the present Minister.

I shall be accused at this point of be[illegible] unrealistic. It is true there is the Natio[illegible] Farmers' Union. And the Union's motto is "[illegible] fence not Defiance," though the order of the [illegible] nouns might well be reversed; and its 182,[illegible] members make up 80 per cent. or so of the farm[illegible] of England and Wales. The difficulties that [illegible] Bevan has had with the B.M.A. are *nothing* to w[illegible] Mr. Williams would have with the N.F.U. [illegible] the spectre of nationalisation were to raise its h[illegible] in Bedford Square. The report that is now be[illegible]

epared on the future of Romney Marsh by the ricultural Land Commission is already pro- ing some preliminary skirmishes. If the mmission does decide that "full and efficient" e of the Marsh, which includes some of the very t grassland in the country (its only rival being Welland Valley in Leicestershire), cannot be ured without State acquisition under the riculture Act of 1947, there may well be a real it. A cry of "the thin end of the wedge of ionalisation" would immediately rally the battled farmers of Britain.

But there are thin ends and thin ends. When State intervenes in a way that will restrict ir liberty of action, farmers, who are nothing ot human, are naturally hostile and suspicious. t, in spite of their rude words, farmers have no ted objection to nationalisation as such. ricultural research, for example, has been tually nationalised for over a generation now. is significant incidentally that the sector of itish agriculture that is most respected abroad is our research. "Rothamsted" and berystwyth" are the names to conjure with day, as "Shorthorn" and "Hereford" were the last century.)

Since 1939 casual labour has also been nationa- ed. At harvest the farmer now relies almost irely on the Labour Department of his Agri- tural Executive Committee, or else on school- or holiday camps organised by the A.E.C. ficial insemination is largely nationalised. So pest control. To this sort of nationalisation, the list could easily be extended, farmers have objection at all. They welcome it. Here the te is doing something that obviously needs ng and that farmers haven't the time to do mselves. There is no direct intervention the farms, except at the farmers' own request, a decent pretence can be maintained that the te is simply supplementing private enterprise. t is on these lines surely that the agricultural olution should proceed. This is not simply a ter of tactics. It is dictated by social justice. If analogy between State intervention to-day and enclosure movement of the eighteenth century tifiable, the role of the dispossessed peasants Arthur Young's time has now passed to the ter and the private landowner. Farmers and downers *as such* will soon be on the economic pheap. It is natural that they should resent turn of Fortune's wheel, and their trans- ation into employees of the State must be as gradual and painless as possible. Nationa- ion by frontal attack, as on Romney Marsh, only lead to losses of time and temper. The ect technique in the initial stages is a piecemeal ltrusive nationalisation, with the emphasis s on projects that will be obviously beneficial the farmers directly concerned. Its own entum may be counted on to extend and inue the process, and in the meantime the ers, apart from a minority of irreconcilables, have been acclimatised to the new system. recent article by Sir George Stapledon in the istry of Agriculture's *Journal* suggests a icularly promising field for this sort of national- on. This is the growing and harvesting of the ll farmer's feeding-stuffs. As he points out, operations as grass-drying or the direct eding of a pasture are quite beyond the small ; even silage-making and the odd field of or kale are often difficult and uncongenial positions on a small farm. "Let the small ter be a stock master *in excelsis* ; this is quite gh responsibility for a good man and true. rest must be done *for* him, more skilfully, in the long run more cheaply, than he could to do it for himself."

he specialist contractors that Sir George ledon has in mind need not necessarily be A.E.C. Machinery Officers. Co-operative ciations of farmers are another possibility, there will always be a place for the really ent private firm. But the A.E.C.s, who are dy in some cases doing precisely what he ests (e.g., on small pre-war all-grass farms, e the acreage did not warrant the investment in their own arable equipment), are the obvious bodies to carry out such a programme. Their services need not be restricted, of course, to cultivation or grass conservation. They are already tending to take over maintenance work, such as the layering of hedges and the cleaning out of ditches.

The next stage may well be for the *responsibility* for maintenance work to pass to the A.E.C., with the farmer paying an annual fee. This would enable the smallholder to devote the whole of his time to specialising in some branch of livestock farming. Specialisation offers a hope of economic reprieve for the small farm. The factory farms into which Dr. C. S. Orwin and Sir Daniel Hall used to wish to amalgamate the existing units are temporarily out of the question, because the materials and manpower that their construction would require cannot be spared. If the level of efficiency of the small farm could be raised by specialisation, as it probably can in the meantime, the economists' case for the factory farm would disappear.

The landlords' maintenance responsibilities could also be transferred to the A.E.C.s. Few landowners are in a big enough way now to keep up the old estate staffs of carpenters and masons, and many of them would be delighted to exchange the worry of it all for a regular annual payment to the State. In this way, of course, the agricultural landlord would become a mere rent-receiver (in many cases that is all he has been anyhow for the last fifty years or more), and his traditional function, the provision and maintenance of the permanent equipment of the farm, would pass to the A.E.C. It might be necessary to introduce an Agricultural Rent Restriction Act to prevent the landlord profiteering from A.E.C. improvements on his farms, and A.E.C. approval of ingoing tenants would also be required. With these two additions we should have in fact, if not in name, the nationalisation of landownership, i.e., the complete exclusion of the private owner from effective control of agricultural land in return for a fixed annual payment guaranteed by the State. The familiar advantages of land-nationalisation—for example, the readjustment of farm boundaries that it would make possible—would have been achieved without raising political issues that are unreal now, because they are a century or so out of date in terms of economics.

If the A.E.C.s assume responsibility for maintenance work and similar operations, their staffs will require overhauling. "Committee labour" has a bad name, because it has been mainly composed hitherto of C.O.s, enemy alien refugees (such as groups of Jews *en route* for Palestine) and prisoners of war, who worked under compulsion and were not officially allowed a bonus of any sort on their output. The tractor drivers, who are English, many of them Land Girls, have a better reputation. The trend now is to smaller gangs, more specialisation and more piecework. There is an opportunity here for a genuinely democratic form of farm work. The A.E.C. gangs, free from the tyranny of the boss's eye, should be encouraged to elect their own foremen and manage their own affairs, a basic salary being supplemented according to each gang's weekly output. The system is already in embryonic operation in some counties, but in others it is having an uphill struggle against the authoritarian prejudices of A.E.C. members and the Ministry of Agriculture. A more positive lead by the National Union of Agricultural Workers is perhaps called for.

One last word. On the whole the Government has been right, I think, in choosing agricultural discretion as the better part of valour. The united reactionary forces of farmers, landowners and his own officials would be enough to daunt the stoutest Minister's heart. But these tactics should be adopted in a Fabian rather than a Falstaffian spirit. The gradual, if inconspicuous, socialisation of farming must be maintained ; it is not enough to drift smiling along the line of least resistance.

F. W. BATESON

FORCED LABOUR IN RUSSIA

IN 1914, under the last of the Tsars, there were some 30,000 Russians doing *katorga* sentences, or penal servitude—a punishment quite distinct from ordinary imprisonment on the one hand and exile on the other. Political offenders and common criminals were mixed up together in conditions of intolerable harshness and squalor, their lives controlled absolutely by irresponsible officials corrupted and demoralised by the power of life and death and by their remoteness from any centre of authority or civilisation. The *katorga* was described in its full horror by several Tsarist writers, notably Dostoievsky and Chekhov. These descriptions make the English reader sick. Nevertheless it could be argued with some justice that the *katorga* differed from our own penal servitude not in kind but only in degree.

The Bolsheviks decided to change all that. Under the Soviet system the motives for crime were to vanish, and with them crime itself. The criminal was held to be the product of a ruinous environment, more sinned against than sinning, and convicts inherited from the Tsar and too far gone for immediate redemption were addressed with loving kindness. On the other hand, something had to be done with the opponents of the new system, who had to be put out of harm's way and, if possible, reformed. So the corrective concentration camps appeared. These were run, alas, not by Bolshevik theorists but by officers of the newly-formed *Cheka*, who turned out to be blood-brothers of their late predecessors of the *Ochrana*. Conditions in the new camps, notoriously in the camps on the Solovietsky Islands in the White Sea, rapidly equalled and then surpassed in horror the camps described by Chekhov in "Sakhalin Island." Russia was still Russia, and now the whole country was in chaos, smitten by famine and war : the prisoners were the first to die of hunger and disease, and there was no question of wasting good men to attend to them. Crime, far from dying out, increased fantastically, and political offenders multiplied. It was against the principles of the Government to build new prisons (or places of detention, as they were now called), and thus the camps became overcrowded even by Russian standards. All this was in full swing under the beneficent rule of Lenin, who, of course, had no idea of what was going on. He, like Nicholas before him, was too busy ; and nobody ever told him. There was a grand attempt to reform the concentration camps in 1923, and then the Bolsheviks gave up.

Already in 1918 the Soviet Government had to decree that able-bodied prisoners were to be put to "tasks necessary for the State, tasks no more strenuous than those of unskilled workers," and for a time a great deal of stock was taken in the slogan "re-education through labour." The prisoners continued to die of exhaustion and disease. Crime flourished and ever fresh waves of "politicals" flooded into the camps—no longer predominantly priests and bourgeois oppositionists now, but revolutionaries who had taken the wrong turning at this or that invisible cross-roads. As the first decade wore on, the labour of these prisoners began to play a perceptible but still uncalculated part in the national economy. Then, fairly suddenly, with the first Five-year Plan and war to the death on the Kulaks, involving the transportation of some 5,000,000 living souls, the whole problem of penal or corrective labour in the U.S.S.R. assumed an entirely new look.

Until 1930 it could still be argued that, like the Tsarist *katorga*, Soviet forced labour was no more than penal servitude *à la russe*. The comparative severity of penal servitude in Russia reflected the comparative severity of ordinary life in Russia. The sickening aspects of the whole institution reflected the difference between Russian and English conceptions of the physically endurable, the powers of police and central govern-

ment, the probity and responsibility of government officials. There was also the Russian idea that the "political" is more wicked and dangerous than the common murderer, blackmailer, or thief, since the one injures society as a whole whereas the other injures only individuals. But with the huge influx of man-power from the villages of Western Russia, the G.P.U., who had control of all prisoners, found itself in possession of a valuable asset. At first the G.P.U. was content to hire out its prisoners as cheap labour for local enterprises, much as the British Government lately hired out German prisoners of war to British farmers, or Displaced Persons in Germany to German firms and municipalities. Later it began to plan its own enterprises. At first the Government in its official calculations took no account of this forced labour. But in 1930 the planning commissions were told to "incorporate the work performed by those deprived of liberty into the planned economy of the Five-year Plan." To answer the new demand, the G.P.U. set up a special organisation, known as GULAG, which still controls the whole immense network of labour-camps—so that the GULAG chiefs in certain areas, notably the Kolyma goldfields, are in fact the governors of huge regions, and, as such, entertain distinguished Western visitors to dinner. For the next stage in this sad progress was the handing over to the G.P.U. of certain projects of the kind hitherto carried out by the relevant government departments, with or without the help of convict labour. It was up to the G.P.U. to carry out these assignments in its own way. It knew only one way. It set its own pace with the construction of the Baltic-White Sea Canal, which was completed in two years. At one time 300,000 prisoners, including engineers of the highest qualifications, were said to be employed on this project, which has been greatly admired as an example of Socialist enterprise. Since all the praise in the Soviet press went to Henry Yagoda, then head of the G.P.U. and afterwards executed, nobody has any excuse at all for not realising that this, among a hundred others, was an exclusively G.P.U. affair.

From that moment the problem of the G.P.U. was no longer how to make the best use of its prisoners, but how to get more prisoners to carry out its projects. And that remains the problem of the M.V.D. today. Since 1931 forced labour in the U.S.S.R. has not been comparable with penal servitude as generally understood but has resembled in principle the slavery of vanished empires.

This is the general outline of the story as it has been generally understood by close students of Russia for a long time past. The Soviet Government has not concealed the existence of forced labour, but only its extent. What was needed for a proper understanding of Russia was a documented survey of its extent and its importance in the Soviet economy. The special value of the elaborate and laborious study by Messrs. Dallin and Nicolaevsky* is not in the story it tells but in the collection and tabulation of all the available facts. Indeed, the story as such is told very badly and with a crassly Russian disregard of the Western European attitude towards Russian mysteries. *The Dark Side of the Moon*, that great and anonymous epic of the Polish tragedy, gives us a far clearer picture of the meaning of forced labour in human terms. Dr. Dallin, when he is not dull and imperceptive, is trying for duty's sake to make the flesh creep, and he contrives to reduce one of the most dreadful and fascinating problems in the world to the level of a political issue by thinking of the Bolshevik régime and its institutions in terms of a handful of political opponents instead of in terms of the Russian land and the Russian people. But his facts are invaluable. Many of them have been obtained from Russians, or pieced together from scattered Soviet decrees, articles in the Soviet law journals, and the analysis of vital statistics and *Gosplan* returns; the majority of them came from the survivors of those Poles who were scattered in misery over the whole of secret Russia. Estimates of the sum total of slaves, which vary from eight to fifteen million, are relatively unimportant. What is important is the matter-of-fact demonstration, illustrated by documented evidence and a long but probably far from exhaustive list of camps and their associated enterprises, that forced labour as an institution could not now be abolished quickly without ruining Soviet economy. Far too many aspects of the current series of plans are dependent on cheap labour carried out by human beings who can be, and are, regarded as expendable.

Nothing could be more wasteful of man-power than this Soviet use of forced labour, which is the fundamental weakness of the Soviet production machine. Nothing could be better calculated to perpetuate, if not to increase, the irresponsible strain in the Russian character which, through improvidence and muddle, comes out as slackness and corruption. But Dr. Dallin is no help to us when we try to get to the root of the matter. He seems to start in the right spirit: "The forced labour system of Russia," he says, "is not the invention of a diabolical mind; neither is it a temporary anomaly nor a tumour on the body easily removed. The system is an *organic* element, a normal component, of the social structure." That is fine as far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. Slavery grew inevitably out of the contemporary social structure; but this social structure itself was not, any more than slavery, "the invention of a diabolical mind": the Soviet régime itself is "an organic element" of Russia. It is at this point that the Western mind seeks guidance which only a Russian is qualified to give, but which no Russian seems capable of giving.

Finally, the Russia in these pages is not the whole of Russia, any more than the Russia we adulated such a short time ago was the whole Russia. There has been no change. It should be evident to all by now that we fail in our trust if we allow a partly barbaric society to supplant our own civilisation on the strength of a single idea. But present anxieties should not for a moment be allowed to put us off the urgent task of trying to see the Russians whole and plain. And even in this matter of slave-labour the Western visitor to Russia crossing one of the great new bridges and overcome by the feeling that he is driving over the bodies of dead slaves should also bring himself to reflect that a more reasonable attitude on the part of his own country towards the Soviet Union of twenty-five years ago would have meant more machinery for the quite necessary and inevitable task of industrialisation, and therefore less reliance on human flesh and blood treated, precisely, as primitive machines, as little children were treated in the pits and chimneys of this green and pleasant land a hundred years ago.

EDWARD CRANKSHAW

* *Forced Labour in Soviet Russia.* By DAVID J. DALLIN AND BORIS I. NICOLAEVSKY. (*Hollis and Carter. 25s.*)

The Arts and Entertainment

THE ALBERTINA

AT the exhibition of Albertina drawings now on view at the V. and A. the accent is on the German school in that there are no fewer than 22 drawings from the hand of Albrecht Dürer. Apparently none of the originals has visited England before. Nor have we previously seen many of the other drawings here presented for our delight, including six by Michaelangelo, nine by Raphael, ten by Rembrandt and eleven by Rubens. But at this point, being myself no kind of scholar, I unfold the excellently informative catalogue, and I follow my eye.

Where do I pull up first? In front of the Rubenses and the Rembrandts; then the Michaelangelos and Raphaels. For how can an eye long trained by study of Cézanne be lured (along with the bulk of spectators, it seems) by the writhing, intellectually explorator lines of Dürer, when the calm and glowing volume o the child's head in Rubens's *Son Nicholas*, becke from the end wall? How be drawn to investiga the maze of contours by which the German maste describes with literal accuracy the wrinkled flesh i *Head of an Old Man* before first enjoying the pote scribble by which Rembrandt's *Elephant*, for instanc is presented? Rubens and Rembrandt at one en of this gallery, and the Italians at the other, betwee them show all the main pictorial virtues on whic the European tradition rests. Forms that are in them selves voluminous are *organised in space* with suc profound art that we are barely conscious of it— so free, spacious, natural and "empty" are the drawings after the obvious ingenuity of arrangeme in the crowded Dürers. Furthermore, these master forms are evoked by a drawing which effaces itse almost completely; we are aware of the forms *befo* we notice the lines and other markings by which th are suggested. But with Dürer the opposite is true it is the lines themselves we are first aware of in h works, which we therefore enjoy first as an intrica flat pattern, as a mesh of filigree metalwork, almos To see through this mesh, to see the form of rock tree or face which it describes, rather than evokes this is a further act, that is almost dissociated from th first. The forms in a Dürer drawing do not *assail* u (like those of Rubens or Michaelangelo, which seem t bulge out of the paper), they have no immediacy they are as much imprisoned as released by th drawing, which keeps them in its cage, half visib behind its iron tracery.

To my mind the immense superiority of Rube Rembrandt and a host of Italians lies in the fact th we cannot separate the flat design of the lines, dashe spots and smudges from the harmony of the form these marks evoke. Their harmony is conceived i terms of solid bodies in space. But there is no conflic between the drawing (which exists on the surface the paper and so must fulfil the requirements of th surface, which are those of *design*) and the volume solidity of the things it depicts. Thus in Rembrandt *Landscape with a Bridge over a Canal*, 63, a lightis amber smudge partly encircled by a sepia scribble the pen are not merely harmonious marks in whic there is embodied, if we choose to see it, a willow tree for us, from the first, these marks *are* that tree. W cannot regard the smudge in forgetfulness of the tree and we cannot see the tree and be oblivious of th line and the smudge. In Rembrandt there is a perfe marriage between the form of receding rutty trac or of voluminous sunlit tree, and a blob or smud or scribble. And it is worth noting that "precision" is not the monopoly of a fine point tracing a line thin as cobweb—the smudge of a thumb may be eve bit as precise, as charged with meaning and definitio

Journeying from the V. and A. to the Leices Galleries we exchange the Old Masters themselv for the only living artist of international fame who frank derivations from the Past give him the appea ance of being excluded from the Present. Though t very qualities which made Augustus John such dominant figure in the art of this country 25 years a now cause a new generation to belittle him, we are from being free to dismiss him as the sentimen cartoonist which the present exhibition for the m part reveals. Pictorial vulgarity and ineptness certainly manifest in these paintings of girls and ma nolias: but in spite of it all there is here an arti phenomenon we must re-examine. That John had notion of the science of glowing colour (compare Vuillard sketch in the next room) and was incapa of relating figures in terms of pictorial composit we already knew. Graham Bell, I think, remarked t John destroys the design of the picture-surface w the very first touch of brush or pencil. One or t dominant forms, placed centrally, float in a colou mist, unrelated to the frame which bounds the Nevertheless John's power to evoke these sit figures amounts to more than skill. Of course means for such plastic evocation as he achieves linear: line, overlaid with flat smudges that arbitrary in colour and tone, does the work. No surf —of face or body—is realised with consisten a "romantic" preconception of the shape of head arm frequently precludes real observation. But th are occasions when his summary statement reve

fragmentary feeling of great intensity. In the huge monotone canvas that covers a whole wall the figure of the old guitarist provides such a moment. The hand plucking the strings; the upturned face with blind looking eyes; the form of the knees through a garment: these stick in my mind as the statements of genius. John's tragedy is one of environment. In his time there have been too few Englishmen of equivalent potentialities. In the absence of criticism or competition, his student success has prolonged itself for 50 years.

PATRICK HERON

RADIO NOTES

KARL ZUCKMAYER'S *The Devil's General*, the study of a non- and ultimately anti-Nazi Luftwaffe general in 1941, is the meatiest play the B.B.C. has given us for many months. At this date one almost inevitably approaches the anti-Nazi play with some suspicion; but *The Devil's General* suffered from few of the vices of the *roman à thèse*: there was no crude black and white contrast between Nazis and anti-Nazis. Action alone changed character; and the figure of General Harras, the non-political, professional aviator of genius who dislikes the Party boys, their manners, habits and beliefs, by temperament as well as by training, was much more convincing now, after the spate of books upon the German opposition to Hitler, than it would have been two years ago. Harras, exuberant, Rabelaisian, heavily Teutonic perhaps in his loud appreciation of women and armagnac, was a fat part which Mr. John Clements played for all he was worth. And he was most ably supported by a cast which gave the best exhibition of acting that one has heard on the air for a very long time. For once—and here one is criticising not merely radio drama but contemporary English drama as a whole—the actors had lines to speak which brought out fullness of voice and demanded wholehearted participation in the characters. The adaptation from the original, which one assumes was written for the stage, was ingenious, and the translation seemed admirable, except at one point: the words "You think you're on a good wicket," spoken at a Luftwaffe party in 1941, evoked, shall we say? not precisely the right associations. One hopes *The Devil's General* is not to be confined to the Third Programme; for it contains more action, more scope for the actor's art, more of the guts of drama, than any play that has been heard in *Saturday Night Theatre* almost in the memory of man.

The Miner's Story, a feature from the North Region written and produced by Mr. Norman Swallow, succeeded admirably in its intention, which was to explain the distrust which besets the miner in his attitude to everything outside his own community. Mr. Swallow's was a programme of great dignity. Miners are often presented to us, rightly enough, as jolly men who race whippets and drink much beer or as hearty hymn-singers in Nonconformist chapels and earnest students at the village W.E.A. Mr. Swallow eschewed these easy ways of winning our sympathy; he set his programme firmly in the events which led up to the great lockout of 1926 and the misery of the Means Test which followed. His miners, then, were miners at war with the mine-owners, beaten and bitter. Mr. Swallow's were Durham men; to me, who know the miners of the Midlands, the programme seemed wholly authentic. It was most moving, and it even achieved a kind of beauty, derived partly from the beauty of character of Mr. Swallow's chosen spokesman, Billy Williams, and his wife, and from his skill in the use of the Durham dialect, which in his hands took on something of the richness of—remote as it may seem—the Irish dialect of the dramatists of the Abbey Theatre. The acting was first-rate; it is always a pleasure to praise regional actors, and one would especially pick out Miss Sal Sturgeon, Mr. George Buchan and Mr. George House.

Mr. Michael Wharton's feature, *The Mormons*, had the great merit of telling a remarkable story, the "revelation" of Joseph Smith and the building up of the Mormon Empire in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. It held the interest because of that. So long as Mr. Wharton remained among the Mormons his story fascinated. But when he left the company of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young to report the reactions to Mormonism of other Americans of the day, one was aware of the thinness of the texture of his dialogue. One still, I find, responds with a thrill of naughty pleasure to the words "God-damned bastard" emanating from the loudspeaker, but the thrill is not as potent as it was, and it may be doubted whether the frontiersmen of a hundred years ago talked exactly like wartime G.I.s propping up Shaftesbury Avenue. Indeed, on the evidence of such frontiersmen as Mark Twain and W. D. Howells, they did not. Their vocabulary was altogether richer.

WILLIAM SALTER

THE THEATRE

"Bob's Your Uncle," at the Saville
"The Whole World Over," at the Unity

When the big American musicals hit the town last year they were used as a stick to beat our native productions. Here was something that would put us on our mettle and teach us how these things should really be done. But any attempt to estimate the influence of *Oklahoma* on the English Musical would "yield," as they say, "a negative result in the case of" *Bob's Your Uncle*. This gentle and engaging musical farce is hopelessly English; Mr. Leslie Henson, the protagonist, and Mr. Austin Melford, the author, might never have heard of the New World, and instead of doing badly what the Americans do better, have mercifully decided to do the kind of thing we do supremely well. The pace of this mild meander in Stockbroker-land is as leisurely as a Sunday afternoon in Surrey: the picture is as pretty as the perennials in a Godalming border: the jokes are about wind and fat and feet and whisky, and they keep us in a genial ripple of continuous chuckling. The Americans, I suspect, would find it boring, but they would miss not only a very typical local frolic; worse, they would miss the comic genius of Mr. Leslie Henson.

It is a pity that international relations prevent us from seeing what the Russians are doing in the theatre; for I fancy that if Simonov's *The Whole World Over* were shown in the West End, it would not only prove interesting and amusing enough on its own merits to draw the town: it might also bring a breath of fresh air into the stuffiness created by controversies and newspapers. From the evidence of this one play Simonov might be a Soviet Priestley. His people are alive and human, and, in this comedy of demobilisation, placed in situations which we can well understand and appreciate. The construction is in a good solid bourgeois tradition, the characters richly various and sharply observed: the inevitable goody-goodiness slight: there are well worked out situations, gentle satire of the super-enthusiastic, and above all humanity and a love of life.

As it is only the devout will see Unity's amateur company tackling the comedy with, for amateurs, a moderate success.

T. C. WORSLEY

THE MOVIES

"This Was a Woman," at the Empire.
"Good Time Girl," at the Leicester Square

Echoes of *Hamlet* still cling to Leicester Square, where at all times a vacuously attentive Shakespeare overlooks the crowd. If he has been listening, he will have heard some very strange comments, from the raptures of the critics who had never read *Hamlet* to the comminations of others who have. Obviously, considered as a new production to be compared with earlier productions, Olivier's film version of *Hamlet* must rank pretty low; for some of the omissions and verbal adaptations there can be no excuse. But also this is a film among other films, and must be considered as such. One must observe the double standard. The *Hamlet* at the Odeon, then, seems to

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me much as it seemed when, last week, I had to write in a hurry. More so, as it were—worse in its obligation to Shakespeare, rather better as a piece of screen entertainment. Its unforgivable fault is that it tediously and literally embroiders for the eye what Shakespeare meant for the ear.

This week, visiting north and south, in the square, one finds the screens a little dim, the fare meagre. Yet these two films, both English, aren't bad; *This Was a Woman* seems to me rather better than its reviews. Miss Sonia Dresdel at least gives a quietly remarkable performance in a hair-raising role. I happen not to have seen her since her stage success of some years ago as Hedda Gabler. Here again is a very Gablerish part, but either the English surroundings or Miss Dresdel's increase of skill has moderated her attack. A more subtle electricity now invades us. How smoothly and implacably she sets out to disrupt a home! It is happy enough, one would have thought, this household in higher suburbia, with a devoted, meek husband, two handsomely grown children on the brink of living, and space enough for a boudoir in the Chinese style. But Miss Dresdel wants enormously more. Away with mediocrity! Oh for power! A successful business colleague of her husband revives her romantic dreams. Bit by bit she corrupts and destroys. First, her husband's prize roses go, simply because he hopes to win a first prize with them; then his dog; then—after her daughter's marriage has been spoilt—the husband himself. She poisons him and she is found out. With a superb gesture she flings open the door to the two policemen who will take her away. Her punishment will be many years' confinement as a criminal lunatic, though she is, in fact, a scheming neurotic of the most responsible kind. It is an effective rather than a deeply convincing film, worked out for the theatre, and distinguished by good acting. Mr. Walter Fitzgerald achieves an unexaggerated pathos as the husband, and Miss Dresdel contrives to be fascinating and detestable, with an unpredictable flash of humanity at the end.

But Miss Dresdel deserves a better part in a much better film. The revival elsewhere of *The Little Foxes* suggests that we may have in Miss Dresdel an actress as startlingly capable as Miss Bette Davis. But will English films provide her with the opportunities?

Good Time Girl wears from time to time a pious look about female delinquency, but it is really another shocker about night-clubs, razor slashing, reformatories, bottle parties, and the good girl gone wrong. As such, the film has its points; it bears some resemblance to reality, and it keeps going neatly if not irresistibly.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

THE CIVIL SERVICE AND COMMUNISTS

SIR,—Your recent reference to the Government's decision to remove Communists, those associated with them and Fascists from certain posts in the Civil Service implied acceptance of the policy, coupled with an insistence that, in its application, a civil servant must be safeguarded against possible error and injustice. I offer no comment on the policy itself, with which I profoundly disagree, but concentrate attention upon the way it is being applied. I shall say nothing about Fascists, because of the fact, which may or may not be significant, that there are no reported cases so far of action being taken against any of them.

It will presumably be agreed by all those outside what I would describe as the "Waldron Smithers" school of thought, that a civil servant threatened with dismissal by this policy should (a) be told on what evidence the assertion of alleged membership or association is based and (b) be given adequate opportunity to disprove any untrue allegation, including the right to be represented by a "friend" before the Advisory Committee of three ex-civil servants.

As regards (a), in none of the cases so far brought to notice has a shred of evidence been produced to support the allegation of Communist membership. This applies in those instances in which such membership is emphatically denied. The Government has informed the Civil Service unions that this information will not be supplied to the potential victim if its disclosure "might involve the sources of that evidence." Since it is wellnigh impossible to reveal the nature of the information on which action is being taken without, at the same time, giving some clue as to its origin, the Prime Minister's undertaking to Parliament on this point on March 15 becomes meaningless. The unfortunate civil servant is thus faced with the almost impossible task of proving a negative. Only the Communist Party could effectively clear away doubts and it is hardly to be expected of them, or, indeed, any other political party, that they will assist M.I.5 to discover flaws in the espionage arrangements by which information is obtained regarding alleged political membership or association.

In the statement to Parliament on March 15, the Prime Minister gave the following undertaking in dealing with the position of a civil servant appearing before the Advisory Committee: "Before this body, the person concerned will be able to appear and make his case. He will also be able to ask other people to speak for him." The Government have now confirmed their earlier refusal to allow a civil servant to be represented or accompanied before the Advisory Committee. He can offer the testimony of a third party, who may not accompany him, as to his general character and conduct. But unless it is to be assumed that membership of, or association with, the Communist Party is a crime, and that evidence of good conduct in other respects is an extenuating circumstance, such testimony is irrelevant to the issue. It is an interesting commentary on the attitude of a Labour Government to trade unionism that a person threatened with dismissal is denied the assistance or support of his trade union representative at an investigation whose outcome may result in his dismissal from Government employment and involve subsequent serious difficulties for him in finding other suitable employment. The authorities are apparently far more concerned to preserve the anonymity of M.I.5 than they are to safeguard the civil servant from possible injustice.

A further point relates to the scope of the "purge." An explicit assurance was given by Mr. Attlee that it would be restricted to those on work vital to national security. In a case just brought to notice the victim has had no regular official job since last August. On several occasions he pressed his Department to give him some work to do. The most they were able to manage was a series of routine jobs involving the recording of official reference numbers and departmental whereabouts of papers relating to equipment for power stations—a job which occupied, on the average, considerably less than two hours a day. He has been suspended from duty with pay on the ground that he is a Communist who is employed on secret work. He is not a Communist. For a brief period of 18 months, more than two years ago, his 25 years' membership of the Labour Party, to which he later returned, was broken by a short spell with the Communist Party, from which he subsequently resigned. Even if it could be argued that the numbers and whereabouts of official papers about power stations equipment are vital official secrets, surely the thing to do was to accede to his repeated request for a transfer to another and full-time job of work instead of wasting time, money and manpower in putting him on compulsory leave at £9 per week because, for a brief period of 18 months in the past, he experimented with membership of the Communist Party.

What I have said may not be conclusive proof that the "purge" is valueless, but it certainly raises serious doubts. Procedure potentially so dangerous to the innocent, and which lends itself to such stupidities, is unlikely to be particularly effective in catching the

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RECORD RESULTS.

The annual general meeting of John Summers & Sons, Limited, will be held in London on May 26.

The following is an extract from the statement of the chairman, Mr. Richard Summers, circulated with the report and accounts for the year 1947:—

Whilst the profit figure of £2,075,000 shows an increase of approximately £500,000, the amount available for appropriation is only up by some £75,000, a striking example of the enormous burden that taxation now places upon industry. There can be no doubt that the very high rates of taxation which both companies and individuals are subjected are, in themselves, a major contributory factor to high prices; if this heavy drain could be substantially reduced a great step forward towards lower prices would be achieved and it would act as a check to inflation. The final dividend on the Ordinary Stock gives a total dividend for the year of 8¼ per cent., the same as last year.

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guilty. In any case, there is already adequate machinery for dealing with a civil servant—if one exists—who, whilst acting as a spy for Moscow, is stupid enough to invite suspicion upon himself by belonging to, or associating with the Communist Party. Section 10 of the Superannuation Act 1859 provides for his compulsory retirement on the ground of "infirmity of mind which is likely to prove permanent."

L. C. WHITE
General Secretary
Civil Service Clerical Association.

SOUTH AFRICA'S ELECTION

SIR,—There are some points in Mr. Bokkie's article on "South Africa's Election," in your issue of May 8, which invite comment.

(1) Mr. Bokkie suggests that Field-Marshal Smuts has moved Mr. Hofmeyr from the Finance Dept. "to a secondary portfolio" because "Rand businessmen don't like him." If that were really Field-Marshal Smuts' motive, is it conceivable that he would have transferred Mr. Hofmeyr to the Ministry of Mines which, in fact, is the "secondary portfolio" in question? The true significance of Mr. Hofmeyr's change of office is generally thought to lie in his having been for the first time formally nominated as Deputy Prime Minister, and it is presumed that he has left the Finance Dept. so as to have more time as Deputy Prime Minister for general political work. Anyhow, his status has been enhanced rather than diminished.

(2) A small point—the Afrikaner Party was not formed by Gen. Hertzog, who retired from politics when he broke with the reunited Nationalist Party, but by Mr. Havenga.

(3) As regards the South African (formerly Dominion) Party, Col. Stallard, their leader, has recently been preaching a native policy of extreme reaction, which has been too much for four out of his total of (I think) six followers in Parliament, two of them being in the Senate. The Party has, therefore, practically disintegrated.

(4) I am surprised at Mr. Bokkie's statement that Dr. Malan has now "many English-speaking South Africans in his ranks." He has the support of the smaller section of the divided Labour Party, that which sympathises with the Nationalist native policy; but I think it would be found that its membership is largely Afrikaner. One of the notable tendencies in the Union during the last few years has been the rapidly increasing flow of young men from the backveld into the cities, especially on the Rand. Dr. Malan, no doubt, is soft-pedalling his republicanism; but his reason for that, I fancy, is that he knows very well that the great majority of his people other than the hot-heads are afraid of it. On the other hand, he has not hesitated in the House of Assembly to criticise Field-Marshal Smuts' immigration policy.

(5) There may be some Socialist measures in Dr. Malan's programme, but I doubt there being much Socialism. When Nationalist politicians talk about some day nationalising the gold mines, their appeal is not to Socialist ideology but to the anti-Uitlander complex. The railways and Iscor, the great iron and steel undertaking, were not "nationalised" in the sense which we associate with the word to-day: the State in each case stepped in as pioneer at an early stage since the country had not reached the point in its economic development at which the necessary resources were available from private enterprise. The railways, for instance, were taken over as early as the '60s of the last century.

W. H. CLARK

PARTY LINE

SIR,—As a bit of a "bourgeois bauble" myself, who nevertheless voted Labour at the last election and who hopes to be able to vote Labour at the next, I have been chewing the cud of the two articles in your last issue entitled "Party Line" and "The Successors of Krupps." The net results are:—

(1) An agreement with the writer of "Party Line" that the Third Force must be the objective of the Labour Party's policy internationally.

(2) A failure to see how this can be, as long as the ingredients of the Third Force remain in the last resort those of its American and Russian rivals, i.e., fear-ridden individuals impotently trying to control the impersonal collectives which their intellectual ingenuity has piled up and their emotional infantilism is proceeding to atomise. (Bishops included!)

(3) A growing conviction that Western Union, including German heavy industry, is destined to be the victim or executioner, or both, of a third world war unless present ideological issues can be transcended by a revolutionary act of faith. Such a transcendence can be offered by the British Labour Party only if its members are capable of submitting to two disciplines: the first is the recognition of and obedience to an absolute spiritual power, which can guide rightly the affairs of men if they will let it; the second is the bold acceptance now of the revolutionary risks of peace (abrogation of national sovereignty, production for use instead of for profit and the unqualified renunciation of the atom bomb) and the rejection of the reactionary certainties of war.

Meanwhile, like so many of the second generation of the men of goodwill, I share the saint's conviction that all men desire peace but that very few desire those things which make for peace.

JAMES L. HENDERSON

CATHOLICS AND POLITICS

SIR,—"Mr. Arnold Lunn," writes 'Spanish Liberal,' "in your issue of April 10th pretends to see in the Spanish Church a champion of freedom." This gross misrepresentation of what I wrote will be apparent to your readers who will therefore know what value to attach to "Spanish Liberal's" misrepresentations of the Spanish Church.

Unlike Father Simcox and Mr. Binns I do not feel that my argument needs to be fortified by personalities, and I shall not suggest that Father Simcox is "neither frank nor honest" but merely that he has forgotten that Leo XIII, after condemning "the worst kind of liberalism," that is, the liberalism "which rejects the supreme authority of God," added: "what we have said must be held to apply to this alone, in the fullest sense." Can Father Simcox quote any Encyclical or Pastoral by an English Bishop condemning English liberalism, and does he deny that the Irish priests in this country in the main supported the Liberal Party because of its attitude to Home Rule?

The persecution by the State of minorities regarded as socially mischievous was universal in the Middle Ages. The fact that the Catholic Church acquiesced in this bad business did not prevent Father Simcox entering the priesthood, and the fact that the Anglican Church approved the persecution of Catholics has no bearing on Anglican claims. Father Simcox might have mentioned that the first persecution of heretics by the Civil Power evoked a violent protest from Catholic Ecclesiastics.

I must correct the implication latent in Father Simcox's statement that I "argue from a private discussion" between the Cardinal and myself. The facts are that Dr. Coulton, who was in close touch with Father Simcox, devoted one of his letters to an attack on the Catholic attitude to parental rights. I consulted the Cardinal, as the Chief Pastor of the Church in England, and obtained his permission to quote his considered views in my book.

In reply to Mr. Binns, the Church meddles in politics when politicians meddle with the Church. As Mr. Binns kindly offered to instruct me in Catholic doctrine I am surprised that he should not know the answer to that elementary point about Keenan's catechism. Of course it was an "invention" to declare that Catholics were bound to believe in the Infallibility of the Pope before that doctrine had been made *de fide* in 1870.

Mr. Binns, like an anti-Semite acquaintance, is highly selective in his evidence. It is as unfair to generalise from Spanish Catholicism as from the more intolerant varieties of Jewish anti-Catholicism. The Spanish Church in many of her aspects is profoundly impressive and edifying, but it remains *Spanish*, and

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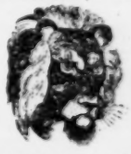

The fable of the lion who blinked

There was once a Lion who opened his eyes to find himself in a world where nobody professed to believe in British Lions any more. 'You're a fabulous monster,' they told him. At that the Lion lifted his head . . . and everybody stepped back. 'I notice,' said he, 'that initiative is still respected among you. I think I can undertake to remind you of my existence.'

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tolerance is a virtue for which Spaniards, be they Catholics or Atheists, have no high regard. Moreover, a persecution in which thousands of priests and nuns were butchered is not a seed ground for tolerance. During my last visit to Madrid the Foreign Minister invited me to lunch to meet the Bishop of Madrid. After lunch I produced a statement prepared at the British Embassy on the subject of some Socialists who were in prison. Next day a Spaniard called on me with the official reply and remarked that his Excellency was interested that I, a Catholic and certainly not a Socialist, should interest myself in the grievances of Protestants and Socialists, and that his Excellency would be interested if I could give him the names of any prominent British Protestants and Socialists who had called on the Foreign Minister in 1936 when Catholics and Conservatives were being butchered by the thousand and intervened on their behalf.

ARNOLD LUNN

SIR,—Mr. Arnold Lunn might well study the history of Ireland if he still believes that the Catholic Church does not interfere in politics unless it is threatened with persecution. From 1169, when Henry II invaded that country with the official papal sanction of Adrian IV, down to the present day when the Bishops oppose school meals as the "thin end of the wedge of Communism," the Catholic Hierarchy has almost invariably sided with the reactionary propertied interests in Ireland. Wolfe Tone was denounced by one Bishop in 1798 as a "cutthroat" while Emmet's followers were described as a "rabble" by another in 1803. During the Famine of 1846-48, when the peasantry were dying by hundreds of thousands, the clergy commanded them to sell their pigs, cattle, sheep and corn to pay their rents, and instructed them that they would lose their immortal souls if they refused to do so. Bishop Moriarty, of Kerry, said, "Hell was not hot enough, nor eternity long enough" to punish the Fenians, while Davitt's Land League was described by Archbishop McHale of Tuam as a "lawless and occult association." In the 1916 Rising Patrick Pearse was called a "crazy and insolent schoolmaster" by the semi-official *Irish Catholic*, and in 1922 the struggle of the Republicans against the Treaty was described (by the Hierarchy) as "morally only a system of murder and assassination."

When old Jim Larkin led the 1913 strikes he was denounced as an anti-Christ, but when he was dead his body was carried to his local parish church (inside which he never set foot when he was alive) amid the hosannas of a bevy of bishops. Only last month it was reported from Cork that a young practising Catholic worker there who had joined the local Socialist Youth Movement was being intimidated by members of Catholic Action who spread stories that he was a Moscow agent, that he had thrown the parish priest downstairs, and that new members of the Socialist Youth Movement had to walk on a carpet on which was represented a picture of Christ's head.

Truly it is no wonder that independent-minded Irish people are beginning to see that official Catholic social policy is almost indistinguishable from that adopted in Salazar Portugal or Franco Spain.

12 Lloyd Square, W.C.1. FERGUS O'BRIEN

THE N.C.C.L.

SIR,—Perhaps you will allow me to state in your columns that I have resigned my membership of the National Council for Civil Liberties.

I have done so on account of the putting forward of an emergency regulation at the annual general meeting last March. The resolution in question invited the meeting to censure the Government for its proposed purge of Communists in key positions. The chairman, when introducing it on behalf of the executive, indicated that it was a civil liberties resolution, and therefore appropriate. I cannot agree. It seems to me that it was essentially a political resolution, and that, since the Council is a non-party body, it should not have been put.

I resign after careful consideration and with much regret. I have been connected with the Council since its early days, and was for some time its president. I recall its achievements under the guidance and inspiration of the late Ronald Kidd, and I am also in sympathy with some of its more recent work.

Reform Club, London, S.W.1. E. M. FORSTER

"TEMPESTUOUS PETTICOAT"

SIR,—In justice to the memory of Marie Connor Leighton, author of *Convict* 99 and other pre-detective story thrillers, a footnote is required to Clare Leighton's book and Raymond Mortimer's review.

Both book and review tell the truth; this "ghastly" woman (Mr. Mortimer's word) was as self-deluded, uncultured, superstitious, and slatternly as they say. She had no use for women (apart from herself) except as the romantic appendages of men, and the cruelty of her daughter's book is a semi-conscious revenge for a youth ruined by alternating persecution and neglect. But truthful as this portrait is, it is not quite the whole truth. One of Mrs. Leighton's dominant qualities emerges from the book only by implication. She was redeemed from utter second-rateness by outstanding courage.

Nothing dismayed or conquered her—neither personal tragedy, loss of fortune, nor diminishing reputation as a harsher age banished Edwardian illusions. Much of this bravery was doubtless due to that imperviousness to the feelings of others which it is now fashionable to call "toughness." But in the book the great tragedy of her life—the death in action of her elder son Roland in 1915—is barely recorded. This son was her mainspring; the purpose of the appalling serials which paid for the education that he so brilliantly justified. Of course, she romanticised him, but the passion was genuine. His death broke her heart but never her spirit. She worked undaunted to the end, dying almost alone during the second war with her husband dead, her daughter in America, and her younger son serving in the Navy.

During recent years many mothers, sometimes repeatedly, have silently endured the loss of idolised sons and daughters. But Marie Leighton belonged to a feminine tradition in which hysteria was considered not only natural but the proper evidence of womanly feeling. She broke with that tradition, thus unconsciously providing an early example to the millions of women who to-day agree with Bertrand Russell that "to be defeated by one loss or even by several is not something to be admired as a proof of sensibility, but something to be deplored as a failure of vitality."

It seems only fair that this too should be said.

2 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, S.W.3. VERA BRITTAIN

HELP FOR CHILDREN

SIR,—During the last few weeks there has been great publicity for the Lord Mayor of London's United Nations Aid for Children Appeal (U.N.A.C.). It is hoped that as a result the public will respond in such large numbers as to make the work of all those engaged in children's relief free from financial worry. Until the money has been collected and the amount assessed, no allocation can be made to those organisations which may qualify for grants. As a result of the widespread publicity to this fund all other appeals have been greatly affected. This means that during the period between the closing of the U.N.A.C. appeal and the time of distribution (which may be a period of several months) the work of those now carrying out children's relief is starved of support. It would be tragic if plans now being prepared for the relief of Italian, German and British children had to be curtailed just when the desire to help is so strong.

We should welcome financial help to cover this gap which is in danger of preventing us from fulfilling the work we have already begun.

Cheques or postal orders would be acknowledged by Dame Sybil Thorndike, Hon. Treasurer, International Help for Children, 43, Parliament Street, London, S.W.1. SYBIL THORNDIKE
JOHN BARCLAY

★ T. O. Beachcroft has established a fine reputation as a short story writer. His new novel, *Asking For Trouble* (7/6), has just been published.

★ John Mortimer's comedy of the film world, *Charade* (7/6), was so magnificently praised that a reprint was put in hand immediately, and this will soon be ready. 'Brilliant,' wrote Daniel George, 'no cleverer first novel has been published this side of the war.'

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

QUITE early in our acquaintance I discovered that Mrs. Webb was more interested in religion than in any other topic. Not until I read this diary,* however, did I know how large a part prayer played in her life. She repeatedly notes that the habit of prayer has brought her through some period of strain, and the only occasion on which she records losing her temper in public—I have seen Mrs. Webb fly out with teeth bared and claws crisping—was at a dinner at Lord Haldane's, when she was told that it was "nonsense" to talk about the value of prayer in school life.

> I fired up and maintained my ground; and in a moment of intimacy, asserted that prayer was a deep part of my own life, whereupon both the Haldanes turned round and openly scoffed at me, Haldane beginning a queer kind of examination in law court fashion as to what exactly I prayed to or prayed about, and Elizabeth scornfully remarking that prayer was mere superstition. It was a strange outburst met by another vehement assertion on my part that the two big forces for good in the world were the scientific method applied to the processes of life, and the use of prayer in directing the purpose of life. Being well-bred persons, we all saw our mistake—I in introducing a note of too great intimacy and they in scoffing at it.

Though Mrs. Webb read much philosophy in her life I doubt if she could have given a clear answer to Haldane's questions. Being a very practical, as well as a well-bred person, she was content to know by experience that prayer was of immense value to her. Prayer was not to her a petition, but a consecration of purpose and a purifying of motive. She held, I think rightly, that in discarding contemplative prayer merely as one of the superstitions of religion, her rationalist friends had lost an important *technique* of the good life. After the adolescent struggles revealed in *My Apprenticeship* she never lost the ascetic's ambition to rid herself of the pull of chance desires. In middle life we find her repeatedly making resolutions to eat less, to refuse coffee, and to take cold baths and exercise every day. She chides herself for vanity when she buys an expensive and pretty frock; she excuses the brilliant dinner parties which she gave or attended by saying, only too truly, "Our social adventures always have a purpose." She was remorseful, after staying with Balfour at Whittingehame, or dining with Lord this-and-that, unless some social purpose was achieved.

> Sidney's influence on the joint-life is wholesome in curbing my lower desires. There have been three separate entertainments I should like to have gone to—Lady Wimborne's, Mr. Balfour's and the Duchess of Sutherland's evening parties. Feeling secure in the possession of an attractive garment I should have liked to parade myself. But S. was obdurate. "You won't be able to work the next morning, and I don't think it is desirable that we should be seen in the houses of great people. Know them privately if you like, but don't go to their miscellaneous gatherings. If you do, it will be said of us as it is of Sir Gilbert Parker—in the dead silence of the night you hear a distant but monotonous sound—Sir Gilbert Parker climbing, climbing, climbing." And I recognised the better voice and tore up the cards.

Mrs. Webb was always happiest when they were alone, doing the solid research for their great *History of Local Government*. She writes:

> One sometimes wonders whether all this manipulating activity is worth while: whether one would not do almost as much by cutting the whole business of human intercourse and devoting oneself to thinking and writing out one's thoughts. It would certainly be far pleasanter, because a far less complicated life, with fewer liabilities for contraventions against personal dignity, veracity and kindliness. It is so easy to maintain these qualities in a vacuum! In rubbing up against others, one's vanity, one's self-will and any strain of spite gets uncovered and revealed in all their ugliness to oneself, one's friends and one's opponents. But someone has to do this practical work . . . . If one frankly realises one's own moral incapacity during spells of activity, it makes one more careful not to admit unworthy desires and thoughts in the times of withdrawal from the world—and the whole level of one's mental life is raised and supported by the wholesome fear of the eternal fall of the man of action.

The concentrated life of research and public service demanded, it is clear, great sacrifices of Mrs. Webb, but none of Sidney. He did not need to pray; he had no chance desires. Lacking all vanity and enjoying all the pleasures of life simply and in moderation, ascetism tempted him no more than excess. Mrs. Webb once hazards the view that he, too, "believed," but it is questionable whether he had any religious views. The subject bored him since there were few established facts on which to form a hypothesis. Such an attitude to life has led many to imagine that Sidney, disinterested and benevolent as he was, lacked the core of ordinary humanity, and some have even poked fun at their "love among the blue books." But the laughter looks cheap as those diaries proceed. It is clear that the love the Webbs bore each other was as happy and commonplace and human as that of any couple that ever lived. Their disagreements might be about the administration of the poor law in the seventeenth century, but they "ended in kisses," and were concluded with Mrs. Webb sitting on Sidney's knee. At times, the duties of research separated them. Here is an extract from the diary: "To-night I rush back to my boy—just for two days and one night—and then begin again at Aberdeen for the inside of a week. It is hard to be away from him—apart we each of us live only half a life; together we each of us have a double life." This is in 1907, when the Webbs had been married fifteen years.

The joint life which they planned together was a unique enterprise and a unique success. The bulk of this large book records their effort to substitute in England a trained and professional ruling class for the inefficient and anti-social plutocracy which they both despised. They differed from their Labour colleagues (about whom Mrs. Webb has so many caustic things to say) because they knew the plutocracy and aristocracy and were not impressed by them. It was Mrs. Webb who invented the phrase, much used in this journal at one time, about the "aristocratic embrace," which emasculated the Labour leaders. The aristocracy had its points because it contained some who understood the art of government as well as the graces of living. But, generally speaking, the ruling classes were only to be cultivated because results could not be achieved without them. In time, as Mrs. Webb explained, the instrument of change would be the working class—though it would have to be provided with trained and responsible leadership. In the meantime there was Chamberlain, whom Mrs. Webb might once have married if he had shared her political outlook; there was Balfour ("a man of extraordinary grace of mind and body . . . a strange paradox as Prime Minister of a great Empire!"). There was also Winston Churchill, of whom her first impressions (modified later) were:

> Restless—almost intolerably so, without capacity for sustained and unexciting labour—egotistical, bumptious, shallow-minded and reactionary, but with a certain personal magnetism, great pluck and some originality—not of intellect but of character . . . No notion of scientific research, philosophy, literature or art, still less of religion. But his pluck, courage, resourcefulness and great tradition may carry him far unless he knocks himself to pieces like his father.

Again, there was Lloyd George ("a clever fellow, but has less intellect than Winston Churchill and not such an attractive personality—more of the preacher and less of the statesman"), and many others, including Milner, whose character and career she analysed with deadly accuracy. All these and other leading lights had to be tried out, and used if they proved worth the trouble.

The political group which proved quite useless were the old-fashioned Liberals (anarchists Mrs. Webb would have called them) against whom all Fabians fought an unremitting battle. Equally useless were Labour demogogues like John Burns and Ramsay MacDonald, all vanity, egotism and ambition. Rosebery, with whom Webb worked in the inspiring days of the reformed L.C.C., proved even more trivial. The best of the bunch was Haldane, who believed in good government and education and proved for a time a staunch ally. About Balfour the Webbs had no illusions, much as Mrs. Webb enjoyed his society. But it was Balfour who put through the 1902 Education Act which Sidney drafted and inspired. And there was the extraordinary adventure, in which Haldane again proved invaluable, of founding and building the London School of Economics. Possibly this was the most remarkable of all the Webbian achievements, for the L.S.E. was founded with a few thousand pounds left for the purpose of Socialist propaganda. It was completely characteristic of Sidney that he decided that what was wanted was not more leaflets or Socialist lectures, but the objective study of economics which, in his view, would lead inevitably to Socialist conclusions.

It was not until Mrs. Webb was made a member of the Commission on the Poor Law that the Webbs were really drawn into open conflict with the ruling class. Much of this book is devoted to the story of that memorable Commission. Mrs. Webb, with Sidney at her elbow, fought first for a full investigation of untrue truisms which the other members would have taken for granted. Then she tried vainly to persuade her colleagues to face the implications of the facts; finally she engaged in a pitched battle with the Chairman. Out of this fight came the famous Minority Report of which the Webbs gave advance knowledge to Haldane in the Cabinet, and which they published as a separate book as the basis of a great propaganda campaign. The story is made the more interesting by the qualms of conscience which Mrs. Webb constantly felt in breaking through the rules of behaviour expected from a gentlewoman and a member of a Royal Commission. Sidney, serenely Machiavellian as ever, supported her in all her troubles and indiscretions.

This fight over the Poor Law forced the Webbs openly into the political arena. They found themselves leading a great social agitation, arranging propaganda in the press, supplying scores of willing workers with partisan ammunition, and addressing meetings all over the country. It was out of the campaign for the Minority Report that Labour policy as we know it to-day really arose. Its philosophic basis, as she said, was "the whole theory of an enforced minimum of civilised life." The logic was collectivism, full employment, a public health service and secondary education for all.

The programme of the Minority Report was not finally achieved until 1948. If this was the inevitability of gradualness, it was too gradual for the Webbs. Sidney's experience of Labour government in 1924 and again in 1929-31 disillusioned him and Mrs. Webb about the Labour Party. If Mrs. Webb had lived to write the second half of *Our Partnership*—this book ends in 1912—it would have told in detail how the Webbs were converted (as she remarks in a short epilogue to this book) to "the Marxian theory of the historical development of profit-making capitalism." Though contemptuous of the British Communist Party they became enthusiastic champions of Soviet Russia. For one thing Mrs. Webb missed in the Labour Party that sense of vocation and call to a disciplined life which she had found it necessary to impose on herself. For a time she believed that the Communist Party in Russia had solved this problem—in spite of "the disease of orthodoxy" which she saw creeping into the new Soviet civilisation.

Some day the world will be allowed to read further selections from this uniquely valuable diary. It is of absorbing interest not only because it deals with the very stuff of contemporary history as seen through the mind of the ablest woman born in England in the last hundred years, but also because it was the secret repository of the literary ability, psychological insight and religious ferment which were frustrated in her public life.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

* *Our Partnership*. By BEATRICE WEBB. Edited by Barbara Drake and Margaret I. Cole. (*Longmans*, 25s.)

FATHER AND SON

Great Morning. By OSBERT SITWELL. *Macmillan.* 15*s.*

The third volume of Sir Osbert Sitwell's autobiography is a high-spirited piece of social and personal history, containing half a dozen notable sketches of character and one superlative full-length portrait; enjoyment guaranteed, provided you read it fast enough to compensate for the author's inveterate tendency to sprawl and over-decorate. On all sides, even in the most judicious quarters, he is now being hailed as a "master of the art of prose"; Mr. Desmond MacCarthy called him that the other day, specifying as a particular merit his "control of the long fine sentence, often as parenthetical and rich in sensory experience as those of Proust, yet ever winding 'somewhere safe to sea.'" Those words surprised me, because the long sentences in this elaborately written series often appear to me to be getting out of control, rhythmically if not logically. Heaven forbid that the elaborate style should be no more attempted, as Mr. Somerset Maughan once advised; few things are more enjoyable in prose literature than the winding, musical convolutions of Browne, Landor and De Quincey, or the intellectual labyrinths, with their many intersecting corridors and unexpected vistas, which fill the pages of Proust and of Henry James. What I question is not the intrinsic desirability of long and elaborate sentences, but Sir Osbert's capacity to bring them off.

> Now, in mid-October, the gardens resembled those of an English June; not only were they filled with roses and carnations, not only with an exaggeration and profusion of plants already known to one in England, so that the little green bushes of lemon-scented verbena, that in favoured positions, and draped with sackcloth, may survive our winter, were here grown almost to trees, showing tawny, flaking trunks, covered with spikes of grey-blue blossom (quite a handsome flower, though at home only one or two of these, and in a wilting condition, grace the most prosperous and sheltered of these shrubs), as well as with their aromatic green leaves, but there were also other and more unfamiliar flowers.

Another flower-piece.

> Beyond, nearer the house, on the upper lawns by the Gothic temple, the rhododendrons, planted a century before, were pitching, it seemed, above their enormous clumps of glittering, dark-green leaves whole awnings and marquees of the most luminous rose and lilac, under tall trees which themselves blazed from top to bottom with the smallest pennons and banners, dyed in the very sap of spring, to which the dark rugosity, due to age and smoke, of their trunks afforded the most touching contrast, because the leaves were so young, while the limes and elms which bore them were so old that each spring, one was certain, must put a last period to their glory.

It can be fairly claimed that both these sentences "work out," in the sense that they can be parsed; but the structure is not strong enough to bear such a weight of ornament, and the elaboration of syntax is achieved only at the expense of rhythm, grace and flow. At first glance, the second quotation seems heavily over-punctuated, but in fact all those commas are rendered necessary by the author's peculiar kind of Chinese-box syntax. Sometimes he feels obliged to sprinkle commas no less freely over quite short and ordinary statements, so that we find ourselves brought up with a series of jolts, as though by a shunting train:

> I am sure, though, that, absurd as, when these things are considered, the peroration to his letter that I have quoted may appear, yet when he wrote it he believed every word it contained.

The truth seems to be that Sir Osbert is a gifted and copious writer, who can write well—not "when he wants to," for he cares immensely about art, and *always* wants to—but when he happens to be in the vein. Like some actors, he doesn't know when he's giving a good performance, and when a bad. He lacks the habit of constant intellectual self-criticism: a habit which has often, it is true, been the death of small talents, who see all too clearly the gap between what they have done and what they set out to do, but which nevertheless must play an essential part in the creation of any large-scale and enduring work of art. He loves words, but often pays no precise attention to their meaning. He can describe an atmosphere as "overwhelmingly touched with poetry" and feel no discrepancy between verb and adverb; or he can begin a 60-page chapter about his school-days with the remark that he finds an "insuperable" repugnance to writing about them. At one moment he sounds like a popular journalist ("blood which in its very pulsing showed steadfastness"), at another like a minute-drafting civil servant ("It will, however, be noticed that even now the majority of artists whom I met belonged to entertainment, rather than offering a purely creative type").

Such criticism is bound to seem finicking to those who care little for the surface and texture of good prose, nor would it be worth making if these three volumes had not been widely praised in terms applicable to—well, let us say, Santayana's *Persons and Places*. As social reminiscence, they are uneven but full of interest. It is not the glimpses of famous people which are most memorable: the author's praise of fashionable hostesses is rather conventional, and he writes far more illuminatingly of the Sicilian actor Grasso than of Nijinsky and Chaliapin. What comes brilliantly to life is the general pre-First-War social and intellectual atmosphere; and the author's sharp eye and satirical gusto lend a wonderfully morbid fascination to his account of anything which he has particularly disliked—in a previous volume, his school-days at Scarborough; here, the glum, tongue-tied life of a pre-war cavalry mess at Aldershot. Best of all are the rapid, telling strokes which evoke unknown characters—such as the obscure, faintly comic, laudatory and predatory circle which surrounded his father. As for the portrait of Sir George Sitwell himself, it is a masterpiece of characterisation which deserves to rank with that of the elder Gosse in *Father and Son*. Philip Gosse was a narrow-minded fanatic, Sir George Sitwell a selfish autocrat; both men contrived to make life almost insupportable for their sons, and the fact that both were convinced that in doing so they were acting from the soundest of motives cannot in any way have sweetened the perpetual pill; and yet each author has avoided the pitfalls of caricature, and treated the always difficult paternal sitter with the disinterested completeness of a novelist. Much of the detail about Sir George Sitwell, is, of course, very amusing; but it never sounds made up. Perhaps one reason why Sir Osbert has found it easy to be so remarkably fair to his father—indeed at times quite warmly sympathetic—is that he is instinctively, both in life and in art, repelled by the quotidian and attracted by the extreme. Sir George was nothing if not extreme; the combination of learning and folly, method and confusion, stinginess in one direction with wild extravagance in others—that may be common enough, but it can seldom have been carried to so gloriously eccentric a pitch. To lecture your son on the inadvisability of taking special trains implies one scale of expenditure; quite another is involved in the proposal to charge him, when convalescent after mumps, 4*s.* 9*d.* a day for the use of his Scarborough house "and a weekly sum for laundry." No man could be ruder than Sir George ("I have replied *seriatim* to your remarks," he writes to his agent, "but you mustn't think that I consider them worth it"); wonderful sanctions, however, could be brought into play at a moment's notice to check outspokenness in others ("I'm surprised! Rude to me in my own motor car!") The clue to his character is quite simple: he was *always* right.

All this wealth and variety of detail, stored by a highly retentive memory, presented with the selective skill of a novelist, prepares the way for the last chapter of the present volume, a kind of apotheosis like the finale of a baroque opera, an elaborate set piece which shows Sir George in the contemplation of his vast landscape-gardening architectural plans, "aloft in a complicated wooden platform erected in and above the lake" at Renishaw. When an attention too often distracted by the magpie miscellaneous accumulation of colours and sounds is concentrated, as it is here, upon the endless fascination of human character, then the writing loses all its self-consciousness and achieves an easy flow which is indeed masterly. DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

THE ORIGINAL ECLECTIC

The Age of Adam. By JAMES LEES-MILNE. LONDON. *Batsford.* 21*s.*

There is more than one Fall with which the name of Adam is very closely connected. This book is about English architecture's Fall from a state of Palladian rectitude in the eighteenth century. In the public mind an Adam house or an Adam fireplace is associated with everything that was most refined in an age of refined taste, so it is not always understood that the subsequent decline in taste had its starting point in the innovations of Adam himself. He was the first eclectic.

Like the one from which his namesake was expelled, the Palladian paradise in which Adam grew up, though law-abiding, was somewhat dull, and he need not be blamed for being tempted to enrich its diet with exotic fruits from the tree of his peculiar knowledge. The result was a short-lived epoch of a wonderful gaiety and elegance, but the price English architecture paid was that the first steps had been taken along a road that eventually left the artist only responsible to himself. The principle of conformity had been abandoned, and when shortly afterwards momentous social and industrial changes undermined the position of architecture, it had no habits more deeply rooted than those of fashion to keep it related to serious standards of value. An age of revivals followed, and then an age when anything that glittered brightly enough on the rubbish-heap of history was thought fit to be picked up for the adornment of buildings and discarded when its novelty had worn off. This jackdaw practice represents the other side of the balance-sheet, to set against the Victorians' enviable conviction and the fertility of their invention. The virus of eclecticism spread from the fashionable world through every level of society. Never again was English architecture to know the enjoyment of an innocent vernacular.

The first of the exotic fruits that Robert Adam offered to men of taste and enterprise came from the Dalmatian coast. As a young architect with ambition but as yet with little reputation, he travelled to Italy in 1754, made the acquaintance of Piranesi who inspired him with his own romantic vision of Roman antiquities, and three years later played a leading part in an expedition to excavate the ruins of the Emperor Diocletian's palace at Spalatro. In 1764, six years after Adam's return to England, a folio volume illustrating the results of the excavations was published, and by then he and his brothers had already established themselves among the British architects who mattered. Compton Verney and Kedleston, both designed as early as 1760, have many of the characteristics of the style associated with the name of Adam, and in the years that followed the style was developed in a magnificent series of mansions the commissions for which made the business-like trio of brothers indisputably the most successful of their profession.

So they continued for many years, their prosperity only marred by their unfortunate financial venture at the Adelphi. Their virtuosity was endless. Besides the elegant classical idiom that they established in the place of the heavy Palladian formality, they built mansions in a castellated style and a Gothic. Most pervasive of all, of course, was their influence on interior decoration and furnishing, where the sophistication of their taste and the quality of "movement." by which they set such store were displayed in a new language of ornament drawn not only from the ruins of Spalatro and the antique stucco decoration of Rome (studied by Robert Adam in

the Baths of Titus and the Catacombs) but from Pompeii and Palmyra and ancient Greece and many other sources, James Stuart's and Winckelmann's studies of the antiquities of Athens having preceded Adam's studies at Spalatro by a few years.

Considered as subjects for a biography the Adam family are not very interesting. Their personalities seem to have been submerged in their work and their life-story is, in fact, the story of the energy and shrewdness with which they worked up their flourishing architectural practice.

Mr. Lees-Milne rightly concerns himself not only with the Adams' buildings but with the architectural setting against which they played so spectacular a part. He begins with Lord Burlington and the Palladian formula and ends with the influence of the Adam innovations in France, Ireland and America. Into the pages between he packs an immense amount of information, rather confusingly arranged and therefore not easy to read, but presented with discernment and scholarship. He gives detailed descriptions of all the principal works of the brothers. The illustrations are numerous but grouped in a way that makes it particularly difficult to relate them to the text. They make the book seem duller than it is because they include so many views that one seems to have seen time and time again. A few specially taken photographs of better quality would have enabled the production to do justice to Mr. Lees-Milne's learning.

J. M. RICHARDS

SOCIALISM FOR IRISHMEN

Socialism and Nationalism. By JAMES CONNOLLY. Dublin. *At the Sign of the Three Candles.* 7s. 6d.

James Connolly, as a writer, appears at his best in such historical studies as *Labour in Irish History*. Only devotees will make much of the volume of short articles from Socialist newspapers and journals which Mr. Desmond Ryan has put together under the title *Socialism and Nationalism*. Alas, such articles, however rousing and effective they may be at the time, do not easily withstand the test of re-publication when a whole generation has passed. There is bound to be too much repetition of a few leading ideas; and the freshness which this repetition acquired from its relation to immediate events is bound to be largely lost. This is particularly true of Connolly, who neither had nor claimed any originality as a theorist of Socialism, except in as far as he sought to establish the entire consistency of Socialism with Nationalism, and to demonstrate that there could be no true Nationalism without Socialism and no true Socialism that did not involve national self-government within a fraternity of peoples. These leading ideas do come out clearly in these articles; but they are repeated again and again rather than amplified or advanced, or even demonstrated. Connolly's purpose in these writings was to influence men to action, to stir up in them a rebellious frame of mind, to withdraw them from the following of the orthodox Irish Nationalist Parties, and to enrol them in one or another of his Irish Socialist Parties or in the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union which he and James Larkin together built up for a time into a formidable economic power.

Connolly was from first to last a revolutionary; and as a Nationalist and Socialist he hated above all else the British governing classes. This hate blinded him at times: it led him, in these essays, to take a view of German policy in 1914 which hardly anyone would sustain to-day. I do not mean merely that he wanted the Germans to beat the British: that, given his fundamental attitude, was natural enough. I mean that he made himself believe that British Imperialism had forced war on a peace-loving Germany—not even that between rival Imperialisms there was, from his Socialist standpoint, nothing to choose. He did not, however, hate the British—only the ruling classes; but he came near to hating, in 1914, those British Labour leaders who supported the British war effort. He came nearer still to hating Redmond, Dillon, and the other Irish Nationalist leaders who took the same course with, in his view, even less excuse.

Connolly was bitter, too, about partition, which he regarded as a crime against the Irish nation. He had worked in Ulster as a Trade Union organiser and as a Socialist; and he saw that the exclusion of Ulster from an autonomous Ireland would make it very hard either to build up an effective Socialist movement or to transcend the quarrels of Catholics and Protestants in the cause of the working class. This aspect of his attitude is particularly brought out in the present volume. The editor promises to follow it up with two more, illustrating other aspects of Connolly's ceaseless rebel journalistic activity.

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MENTAL HOSPITALS

Inside the Asylum. By JOHN VINCENT. With an introduction by VERA BRITTAIN. *Allen and Unwin.* 6s.

People who go into mental hospitals, whether under certificate or as voluntary patients, have very good reasons for doing so. Wrongful detention is one of the popular delusions about mental hospitals which is entirely without foundation. Mr. Vincent himself remarks: "I am confident that there is no likelihood of any man or woman being wrongfully detained in any mental hospital. All such institutions are grossly overcrowded, and the staff desperately overworked. . . . The hospitals take a legitimate pride in those cases who are discharged fully cured or considerably improved. . . . We can be assured that every patient in a mental hospital is mentally ill." This very fact makes the testimony of sufferers about mental hospital conditions open to doubt. This is not to question the completeness of their recovery; but memories may be inaccurate from faulty and distorted perception at the time of illness.

The great value of Mr. Vincent's book lies in its apparent objectivity, its complete freedom from psycho-analytical interpretation of his own conduct, and its inherent probability. When Mr. Vincent says: "Another thing which has caused me discomfort is the misunderstanding about my sense of humour. Time and again I have been accused of not seeing the joke . . ." his whole story bears witness to the truth of his assertion. The history of the patient suffering from melancholia is often gloomy. In Mr. Vincent's case, the gloom is unmitigated. All the more credit to Mr. Vincent for resisting the temptation to push the blame for his misery on to those with whom he has come in contact.

His father was morose and ill-tempered, an object of fear to his family. His Sunday afternoon

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walk often took him round the cemetery, for there the people "did not answer back." He would open and read all his children's letters. "I cannot recall," says Mr. Vincent, "one thing in life which I value which was taught to me or first revealed to me by my father." His paternal grandfather was no less cruel. He once presented the father with a dog whip for beating the children with; and only long and painful arguments on the part of Mrs. Vincent, which always culminated in tears, prevented the blows. Strangely enough, the son found these more painful than the non-delivered thrashings. Perhaps this was because his mother was a weak character, full of sighs, wan smiles and helpless looks; her cooking, too, was atrocious.

One paternal uncle was in an asylum. Another cut his throat in the park while dying of cancer. The eldest daughter of the family married an aggressive psychopath; their only child was an imbecile; and she too died of cancer at an early age. The middle daughter suffered from terrible bouts of asthma. The eldest son was killed in the closing hours of the 1914–18 war, shortly after an unhappy marriage.

It is not, therefore, surprising that the author's childhood was unhappy. ". . . my childhood had some sunny hours, although some shadow always fell upon these. . . ." Indeed his whole life seems to be one unending misery. After a period of a late adolescent religious fervour, in which he became an itinerant Methodist evangelist, he suddenly threw up this means of livelihood. Not, however, before he had attempted suicide in a gas oven plus the proverbial cushion. Fortunately, the old maids with whom he lodged, had turned off the gas at the mains before going out. His subsequent work record is remarkable for the number of his jobs, and the lack of staying power displayed in each. A period as a C.O. land-worker brought no relief; relationships with farmers were poor, and changes frequent.

Marriage, as might be expected, brought no satisfaction. Mr. Vincent discovered he was impotent. His wife showed nervous symptoms and evidence of misplaced emotional values. She suffered from constant headaches. "She would be struck with contrition for a spider or a worm that was in pain, and anxious that it should be instantly destroyed. To sit up all night with a sick puppy was an obvious duty . . ." yet "an insult to herself was forgotten almost at once." It was a combination of reactive depression (that is melancholia in which outside factors predominate in causation) plus impotence which eventually led him to a psychiatric out-patient department; and when, in due course, he left the mental hospital cured, his physical demands were so great that his wife in turn developed frigidity. In this unhappy state he leaves us.

The special value of Mr. Vincent's story is his description of life in a large county mental hospital. Even those familiar with mental hospital life will learn much from seeing it through the eyes of an intelligent and sensitive patient. Nurses and patients are described sympathetically. He wonders at the mixing up of different types of patient, and shrewdly speculates that this may be deliberate, so that the least sociable may benefit from contact with the more normal. In the main, the patients were pleased, or at least not violently displeased, with the treatment they received. Four psychiatrists had to attend 1,300 male and female patients, but nevertheless one of them gave him analytical treatment every two or three days over a period of two months. His most serious complaint was the lack of privacy, in bathing and in the toilets, and the absence of any quiet room where those who wished to read or write could do so without the wireless. The great prison-like buildings of the mental hospital are in themselves a relatively unimportant feature of Mr. Vincent's story. The stigma felt by the discharged patient is as much subjective as objective.

Had Mr. Vincent written his story fifteen years ago, there would have been no out-patient psychiatric department, staffed by a mental hospital doctor, to which he could have turned. There would have been two or three and not four doctors to 1,300 patients. And none of these two or three would have been capable of giving him the psychiatric treatment he received. After a long period of stagnation, our mental hospital services have begun to wake up. This awakening could not have happened at a more opportune moment. On July 5th, the Regional Hospital Boards will take over all the psychiatric services, and will begin the job of integrating them with the other hospital and specialist services. Money will no longer be a limiting factor. But there will, nevertheless, be enormous difficulties to be overcome. First, the number of psychiatric out-patient clinics must be increased. As a rule, these should be located in general hospitals, unless communications make this difficult. Next, psychiatric blocks in general hospitals must become the rule. These are the proper places for all first admissions, acutely ill patients and minor psychiatric illnesses. Only when it is clear that speedy recovery is out of the question should the patient be moved to a long-stay mental hospital. For the minor psychiatric illnesses (the so-called neuroses) there is much to be said for the Day Hospital (pioneered at Montreal). The patient lives, works and is treated in hospital during the day and returns home at night. Thus staff is saved, the unnatural concept of bed for the physically well is avoided, and the need for the difficult adjustment on returning home is done away with. Complete mobility of staff between out-patient clinic, psychiatric block, and long-stay mental hospital is essential if their efficiency, enthusiasm and sanity are to be preserved.

The most difficult legacy of the past is provided by the mental hospital buildings themselves. Unhappily, the Victorians built these places to last. In my experience, the optimum size for a long-stay hospital of any kind, for patients, staff, and doctors, is about 250 beds. No doubt cost accountants and sanitary engineers prefer the large units. But community sense cannot be built up and humanity maintained in these vast agglomerations. When the Regional Boards are at length able to start new building programmes, we must build for the inhabitants and not for the rates.

Meanwhile, the Boards and Management Committees can do much by providing increased privacy and quiet for those who want it, by increasing the numbers of medical staff, and by improving nursing training. The work of mental nursing is fascinating, but recruitment is bound to have its difficulties. The sentimental reformer makes a bad nurse. Good kindly common sense and a sound pair of feet are the essential attributes. Management Committees need to be younger, more active, and more enthusiastic than they have been in the past; and finding the right people for them is going to be one of the most difficult jobs confronting the Regional Boards. Mr. Vincent's little book should be compulsory reading for all newly appointed members.

STEPHEN TAYLOR

MONMOUTH'S MOTHER

Lucy Walter: Wife or Mistress. By LORD GEORGE SCOTT. *Harrap.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The question implicit in the sub-title of this book is answered, one suspects at once, by the author's name. Yes, indeed; the late Lord George Scott believes most firmly that his ancestress was a lawful wife, though he admits we cannot know for certain.

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And if Charles II, in the days of his adversity really made her so, their son the Duke of Monmouth should have been King of England. This, indeed, has long ceased to be practical politics—as Lord George carefully reminds us: the Act of Settlement, in favour of the Hanoverians, being decisive. What he wishes to prove is not so much that the Welsh beauty was a queen as that she was virtuous and grossly traduced. To decide the merits of the case is an expert's job, and to follow him from point to point is nearly impossible. He confronts us with a jungle of quotation and argument, reiterations and conjectures and impenetrable family trees. And the fact is, he was making bricks without straw. We know almost nothing definite of Lucy Walter—not enough to put her down as the traditional harlot, still less to hold with Lord George that but for villainous usage the poor girl "would have been a saint."

His first care is to establish her pedigree. And no doubt she was well born; whether, as Clarendon denied, "of great family" is another thing—and unimportant to the moral issue. Indeed it would have looked better if her parents had been "mean creatures," and had led another sort of home life. Lord George's comment that they evidently did not get on is an almost comic summing-up of their "prolonged litigation" and wholesale onslaught on each other's characters. It was a deplorable *ménage*, but after all their daughter may have taken no harm. And Charles, being very young, may even have married her; there may well have been some form of contract, though whether legal and binding, who shall guess? The bulk of Lord George's evidence is hearsay twice or thrice removed, of which he would make short work if it told on the other side. But there are striking points as well, and we just don't know. As for his assumption of a plot to blast her claims by atrocious calumny—in view of Anne Hyde's experience, one can believe anything.

On the other hand, when he compares Lucy's attitude to that of Mrs. Fitzherbert—"although abominably treated, they both held their peace, which is at any rate the way a lady should accept calamity"—then one must convict him of bias out of his own mouth. It seems pretty clear that Lucy, at the end of her life, was a good deal of a virago. Admittedly, while the exiled court had only just bread to eat she was insisting on a pension far beyond the King's means, and threatening to "post up" all his letters if it was not forthcoming. This can hardly be described as "holding one's peace." Nor must her clinging to the little James be ascribed off-hand to sheer mother love. It was Ormonde who referred, at this time, to her "wild and disgraceful courses," "the reproach her past ways have brought upon her," and thought that she was "making a property" of her little son. On the boy's removal at nine years old, his tutor wrote: "It is a great pitty so pretty a child be in such hands as hitherto have neglected to teach him to read or tell twenty though he hath a great deal of wit and a great desire to learn." One may think this puts Lucy's "outcries," on the first attempt to seize him, in a new light. On that occasion she apparently raised the town.

Then there are a couple of stabbing incidents. First she tries to stick a bodkin into her maid's ear, and then again her "kinsman or servant" stabs Tom Howard through the arm. The authority in this case is Hyde, and both stories are at least contemporary—not invented by or for James II for political reasons. Lord George concludes that Lucy had a "passionate temper" which was now "considerably ruffled" and explains the stabbing affair, "if she had anything to do with it."

One must say this conjecture is reasonable. Many of his others are very wild; but in the poverty of data, it would have taken great strength of mind not to strain the evidence.

K. JOHN

RIVERS

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To many of us the clearest and happiest recollection of an English river is of a midsummer afternoon spent reclining on the faded plush cushions of a punt, with the painter tied to a willow branch and the punt pole in its leather slings. Perhaps there was a kettle and a primus, jam sandwiches and wasps. There were water rats with their usual air of pre-occupation, and aloof swans, and—for a moment—a kingfisher.

Of course there are also those who row; eight resting breathless on their oars while the coach dismounts from his bicycle to explain at least a few of the mistakes. And there are those who sail; leaning outboard, as the fourteen-footer heels to a gust, with such determination as to souse their back hair. And some go fishing; watching the coloured float from a campstool, or—if they are near-millionaires—flicking flies into a chalk stream for fastidious trout.

There are other kinds of English rivers as well: the urgent ones that flow over (and under) the magnesian limestone of Yorkshire, the leafy brooks of the New Forest, the rectilinear embankments brimming dangerously with the Trent or the Nene. And still others: Irwell, Mersey, Don, and Aire, soupy and black, covered with a shifting iridescent scum.

There could be many books about our rivers but there aren't. The publishers claim that Mr. Rodgers's one is "the most comprehensive in text and beautiful in illustration that has yet been devoted to the subject." Well, some of these photographs are attractive and interesting, but after all there is Turner's *Rivers of England*; and, though Mr. Rodgers gets a lot in he also leaves a lot out, for he has only a hundred and seventy pages. He leaves out geography (in the strict sense) and geology, and the varied and fascinating natural history of our rivers, he leaves out the strategic importance of our rivers and he has not much to say of the part they played in our history. He has something to say about law and administration of rivers, inland water transport, land drainage, flood prevention, fishing, water-pollution, customs, and folklore, but what takes up a great deal of his space is something that is usually called "literary associations." Like this:

> At Kew the artist Zoffany lived and Gainsborough was buried at his own wish in the churchyard. Gainsborough was a friend of the architect and draughtsman Kirby, who was a teacher to George III before he came to the throne. After 1760 Kirby was appointed clerk of the works at Kew Palace. He is perhaps better known as being the father of Mrs. Trimmer, the celebrated author of the charming *History of the Robins*, and . . .

This, it must be admitted, is an unusually bad example of Mr. Rodgers's manner. Those with a taste for literary associations may enjoy even this, but those who are interested in English rivers will undoubtedly wish that his ideas of relevance were different. Sometimes his quotations from the poets are apt and unfamiliar; it may even be that the publisher's claim for his text is not unjustified, but this, if so, is a rather daunting thought. It would be possible to forgive Mr. Rodgers his omissions, it is his inclusions that exasperate: "The Waveney . . ., has on its Norfolk bank Diss, where the poet Skelton was rector for many years. When his secret marriage was reported to his Bishop . . ." and so on.

Oh bother Skelton's bishop! Let's get back to the rivers, especially those placid Midland ones which are the chief beauty of the mild countryside; the wide Ouse at Bedford for instance, or the tiny Leam above Leamington Spa; rivers

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that wander about England incognito, only glimpsed momentarily from a train or a car as it leaps across a bridge; rivers unapproachable on foot without trespassing on highly preserved woodlands, untraversed by boats because of weirs and riparian landlords. Our national parks may all have to be in the high hills or on distant coasts but something should be done for the midlanders, who—though far from hills and sea—have on their doorsteps the beautiful, quiet scenery of their slow waterways.

Here, I am glad to say, Mr. Rodgers and I are in complete accord. There should be riverside footpaths and many more ferries, says Mr. Rodgers; and boats, I would like to add, not launches, but skiffs and eights and wherries and sailing dinghies and punts with faded plush cushions and a painter that can be tied to the branch of a willow tree. STEPHEN BONE

Week-end Competitions

No. 952

Set by F.C.C.

The other evening on the Brains Trust, Bertrand Russell declined this irregular verb:

I am firm,
You are obstinate,
He is a pig-headed fool.

The usual prizes are offered for three other examples of this type of irregular verb. Entries by May 25.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 949

Set by Allan M. Laing

There is a well-known anonymous verse which runs:

Forth from his den to steal he stole:
His bags of chink he chunk,
And many a wicked smile he smole,
And many a wink he wunk.

By itself this stanza is obviously incomplete. Competitors are asked, for the usual prizes, to complete the poem by adding a first and third stanzas in the same manner.

Report by Allan M. Laing

I expected a quite small number of entrants—say thirty or forty—with three or four prize-winners to be spotted almost at a glance. It was not at all like that. Well over two hundred competitors "had a go," with "backwoodsmen" in full force. Most of the competitors, especially the regulars, were too clever and complicated. I looked for verses as simple and natural as the type stanza. Without compensating qualities, I was not prepared to overlook more than one genuine past tense word in each stanza, and I counted on the invented ones to sound, at least, like real words, and if possible, to sound funny. In short, in this competition ingenuity's task was to appear ingenuous. To that end (as Herta Marleyn remarked) "what sweat" they "swot!" After much prayer and fasting I brought (or brung) my final selection down to nine. For Guy Innes, whose entry, while not so funny as others, was sound and impeccably neat, I suggest a prize of two guineas; with half-a-guinea each to R. Hemington, I. A. Ireland, E. M. H., H. A. C. Evans, B. Murray (who thinks "you're all far too clever for me"), Chas. H. Stephens, D. M. Low, and Joyce Johnson (whose "Portrait of a Prizewinner" may not be exactly relevant, but is certainly funny). The runners-up are far too numerous to mention.

O'er him in vain the preachers praught,
In vain deep thinkers thunk:
The sting of conscience never staught,
And never a blink he blunk.

* * *

Did someone peach? Ay, someone paught;
The handcuff's link was lunk,
And when the Law's long reach was raught
In ink his doom was unk. GUY INNES

To win another prize he prose,
The flap with stick he stuck,
Up from his place to rise he rose,
The stamp with lick he luck.

* * *

It was a triple try he trew,
For in the swim he swum,
No judge was in the know, he knew,
His nom-de-plumes to plumb.
JOYCE JOHNSON

That night a thoughtful whiff Bill whuff,
A generous swig he swug,
No further dubious ifs he uff,
His workaday rig he rug.

* * *

Alas! a fatal trip he trup;
As at his swink he swank,
A lurking cop a clip him clup,
And right into clink he clank.
D. M. LOW

In indolence his reign he rogne
No fruitless care he core,
From markets black his drain he drone;
All in his snare he snore.

* * *

Until to gaol his dance he dunce
Where many a bleat he bloat;
Before the Judge a wince he wunce
As many a threat he throat.
C. H. STEPHENS

One night the town in sleep did slope:
Bill Sykes his drink had drunk;
Out of his door one peep he pope,
And through a kink he kunk.

* * *

That night they caught this thief who thofe:
No chink in clink he clunk:
No more his evil laugh he lofe
Soon his last blink he blunk. B. M.

He woke at the shattering snore he snare:
From his bed with a leap he lope;
He looked where his evil store he stare,
And his tools in a heap he hope.

* * *

Up a wall with agile shin he shan,
And his teeth with grit he grut;
But from fingers and knees his skin he skan,
So, deciding to quit, he quut.
H. A. C. EVANS

Soon as the Budget news he knew
The wireless switch he swutch;
Bloodcurdling baccy-cries he crew—
With burning itch he utch.

* * *

Shopwards with muffled tread he trod,
The lock with pick he poke:
Pursuit with direful dred he drod,
And in its wake he woke! E. M. H.

The burglar's wife in bed she bode
As from its springs he sprung;
His weapon grim with lead he lode,
His tools with thongs he thung.

* * *

The cops upon his tracks they truck
With practised slink they slunk;
Then on his skull a crack they cruck
And to the clink he clunk.
I. A. IRELAND

At all in honest trade who trud
His subtle sneer he snore;
In spite of all the prudes who prud
His foul career carore.

* * *

The upward social climb he clomb,
Right to the top he tope;
But every little crime he crome
Increased the drop he drope.
R. HEMINGTON

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UNF. flat to let, London, S.E.23. 2 rms., kitette., bathrm. £156 p.a. incl. el. ltg., c.h.w., use gdn. Box 2705.

TO let, small furn. bed sitt., Lancaster Gate dist.; moderate rent includ. light and heat. Box 2704.

CONWAY Chambers, Furn. Serv. Rooms. Just opened, redecorated throughout. Reasonable. 61-62, Leinster Sq. W.2.

STUDENT received Mon. to Fri. B'fast, dinner, 12 mins. Baker St. 30s. Arnold 4817 after 6 p.m.

N. CORNWALL. Two fishermen's cottages beside beach and miniature castle overlooking Atlantic to let furn. April, May, 3 to 4gns. p.w., also part June. Lovely unspoiled coast; food delivered and home-grown. Maxwell, Porquin, Port Isaac.

YNG. couple want sm. furn. flat/room, Cent. Lond., Aug. 4-Sept. 10. Box 3699.

TWO Ex-Wrens, now working in London Hospitals, require small flat. Must be reasonable and central. Box 2680.

WANTED for 2 ladies, Bed-sitting Rooms with meals and service in Guest House or small hotel. Central London pref. Box 2679.

COTTAGE by sea wanted in Cornwall for July-Sept. in exchange for delightful Hampstead flat. Box 2665.

Where to Stay and Restaurants

BOURNEMOUTH'S Loveliest! Hotel Miramar, East Overcliff, offers you every comfort and modern facility combined with a charm of atmosphere quite unique. Resident Proprietors. 'Phone 1081.

STEYNING Mansions Hotel, Brighton, Kings Cliff. Sea front near bathing pool. Unique comfort and excellent cuisine. Every room has own private bathroom "en suite," G.P.O. 'phone, wireless and elec. fire. Lift. Garage. Fully licensed. Brochure, 6½ to 10gns. Tel. 2589.

BEAUMARIS, Anglesey. If you are seeking a truly peaceful holiday this House offers warm welcome. Spacious and comfortable accomm. Unrivalled vista of sea and mountains. Own poultry and garden prod. Mod. amenities. Garages. Bus route. Sec., Brynhyfryd. Tel.: Llangoed 57.

WOOLACOMBE Bay Hotel, Woolacombe, Devon. Esteemed as an hotel embodying every aid to supreme comfort. In 8 acres adjg. famous Woolacombe sands. Cocktail lounges, ballroom, billiard and recreation rooms. Sep. children's dining/play rms. Fr. 10gns. Trains met. Main line Waterloo/Morthoe. Tel.: 88.

OLD Sussex Village, comfortable accommodation and good country food at Blenheim Farm, Robertsbridge. Horses for hire, 700 acres rough shoot. Terms 5gns. weekly. Robertsbridge 148.

VEGETARIAN Country Club high up in Surrey. Thinkers' rendezvous. Generous meals. Upwood House, Caterham. Tel. 3633.

BATTLE. Excellent bus service to both Hastings and Bexhill. Priory Guest House offers summer holiday accommodation at 4½gns. inclusive. Tel. Battle 262.

BABBACOMBE Bay Hotel, Babbacombe, S. Devon. On the Promenade of this lovely resort. This up-to-date hotel provides modern comfort, obliging service and good meals. Tel. 871311.

DEVON. Pilton House, Pinhoe, Exeter (Tel. 67574?). Small country house hotel in lovely garden, near city. Good centre for seeing Devon, or residential. Terms reasonable.

DEVON, Country hse., between Dartmoor and sea; all conv., ideal children, own produce. 4-5½gns. Part, Colmer, Modbury.

ALTON, Hants, modern cottage, own farm produce, pleasant country, bus route. 4gns. Box 2687.

SUSSEX. Willow Brook, Hassocks. Private Hotel in unspoilt Downland country. Hour London, six miles Brighton. Glorious views. Southern aspect. Hot & cold, fires in bedrooms, central heating, spacious gardens, own produce. Holiday bookings now. Hassocks 424.

BERKSHIRE Downs. Ideal walking country. Ten minutes to river by bus. A few guests taken in small, quiet, sunny house. Own eggs and garden produce. Weekly terms 4½gns. Also week-ends only. "Lamorna," Upper Basildon, nr. Pangbourne, Berks.

ISLE of Wight Country House, h. & c. running water, indoor sanitation, elec. l., 23 acres to sea, 5 reserved for nudism, optional, with fresh water pool. Brochure (stamp) N. S. Critchard, Woodside, Wootton, Ryde, I.W.

RUNNACLEAVE Hotel, Ilfracombe. Visit this grand coast. Find happiness and good company at Ilfracombe's largest and one of most popular hotels (150 bedrooms). Resident Band: Harry Roy's Dorchester Orchestra. Licensed. Tel. 581.

LONDON, 124 Sutherland Ave. Maida Vale. Bed, brkfast., dinner, 12s. 6d. daily inclusive.

Where to Stay and Restaurants—continued

THATCHED cott. Guest Hse., country hs. Bus Camb. 6 m. Haines, Eversden, Cambs.

EIRE, Achill Island, Mountain View Hotel, Dugort, Co. Mayo. Situated amidst Magnificent Cliff and Mountain Scenery, overlooking Blacksod Bay. Excellent cuisine. Terms £4 10s. weekly. Apply Mrs. S. Hoban.

TIDES Reach Hotel, Salcombe. Beside a delightful sandy cove; grand wooded hills around. Own boats and bathing floats for hire. Mod. comf. throughout. Gd. & varied menus. Trains met at Kingsbridge. Tel. 288.

MUDDIFORD, nr. Barnstaple, N. Devon. Broomhill, in seclusion of 250 acres own grnds. Amenities of well-managed hotel, but homely atmos. of comf. country hse. Billiards. Really good country fare. Tel. Shirwell 62.

LAKES. Charming old mansion, magnificent view. Modern conveniences. Croft Hotel, Ambleside. Tel. 334.

LOOE, Cornwall. Bodrigan Hotel enjoys a lovely panoramic view of river and sea. Has a character all its own, attractively comfortable, modern amenites, good cuisine, excellent wines. Tel. 266.

NORTH Wales, accommodation as paying guests in private house, ideal surroundings, bracing air. Box 2614.

CALLANDER, Perthshire (Gateway to Trossachs). Vegetarian Guest House. Well-balanced meals, h. & c. in bedrms.; excel. centre for touring, climbing. No smoking. Mrs. May Monro, Brook Linn, Callander 102.

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HOLIDAYS in Switzerland at Hotel Pension Maria, Sils-Maria, Engadin, 6½ miles from St. Moritz. Good fam. Hotel, exc. cuisine, h. & c. all rms. All incl. rates, summer S. Fr. 16 to 17.50, winter S. Fr. 17 to 18.50.

WEST Ireland—Dugort House, Dugort, Achill, beside beautiful bathing strand; vacancies for July & August. 90s. weekly inc. Apply Miss Lavelle.

QUIET holiday, N. Cornish coast. Dbl. bedrm., pte. sittingrm. overlooking sea. All mod. con. 6gns. a head wkly. June, July, Aug. Trever, Aller Pk., Welcombe, Nr. Bude.

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WYCHWOOD Girls' School, Oxford, 10 to University age; small classes; exceptional cultural and musical opportunities, self-governing community. Apply Miss Lee, M.A.

RELIABLE advice given (gratis) by Truman and Knightley, Ltd., concerning schools for boys and girls. Clarendon House, 11 & 12, Clifford St. W.1. Regent 2803. Founded 1901.

Readers' Market

FOR Sale: Oxford Shorter English Dictionary (2 vols.), 1933—offers; 12 Volumes "Children's Wonderland Knowledge," as new—offers; Swedish Linguaphone, as new, £8; James Autocycle, perfect condition, £40; Records Matthew Passion, Leipzig Choir, £4; Italian Linguaphone, £7; German Linguaphone, 4½gns.; Baby Empire Portable; Leather Sports Case, little used, 2 tennis, 1 Badminton racquets, 6 balls—£6 lot; Electric Razors available—Remington, Schick, Philips, etc.; Morning Suit, chest 38in., leg 29in., £10; Beautiful White Lamb-skin Coat, new, lady's, medium size, 20gns.; Kelim rug, 4ft.×10ft., £20/nearest offer; Superior Leaden Toy collections, Lilliput Farm, 1201, £3, Crusaders £3, Dairy Farm £4, Zoo £5, Red Indians, £3; Man's d.b. overcoat, dark blue, satin-lined, slim, 5ft. 10in.-6ft., offers.

WANTED: Joyce Cary's Novels, before 1944; Portable Typewriter, international keyboard; Montessori Apparatus; Mahogany Writing Bureau; O.U.P. History England; Stenton—Anglo-Saxon England; Collingwood & Myres—Roman Britain and the English Settlements.

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